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Domestic Olives Continue Decline page 7

VALLEY VOICE

Volume XXXV No. 17 • 3 September, 2015 www.ourvalleyvoice.com

Tulare Man Claims PD Brutality

Catherine Doe

Jonathan Smith, a longtime resident of Tulare, left his home Tuesday morning, August 25, to cash a check and stop at the hardware store. But a funny thing happened on the way to the bank. His twenty minute errand turned into a seventeen-hour ordeal and he didn't make it home again until 2:30am the next morning.

According to Smith, he was slowly driving down South K Street when he noticed a police car following closely behind. Even though the police car did not have its lights flashing, Smith pulled into a mom-and-pop auto repair shop and stopped his car. He rolled down his window and asked the officer if he needed something. The officer asked to see Smith's license and registration. Smith asked the officer to identify himself so he knew the officer was legitimate because he was acting funny. The officer responded by returning to his vehicle and calling for backup.

Within three minutes the compact parking lot was buzzing with five police cruisers. The same officer approached Smith's open window with a ticket booklet and ordered Smith to sign his traffic ticket. Smith asked what the ticket was for. Because he inquired as to the nature of the ticket, which was interpreted by the gaggle of police as a refusal to sign, a second police officer reached into Smith's car and pulled the handle. Before Smith knew what was happening he was laid out on the cement parking lot. On his way out of the car, the left side of his head was smashed against door. Once on the ground, the officer tried to grab Smith's cell phone, which was recording the altercation. Smith hugged the phone tightly against his chest to protect it.

From the back seat of his car, Smith's Golden Retriever, Chizum, leaped out to protect his owner. A policeman drew his gun on the dog. Another policeman saw the drawn gun and quickly tasered the

TULARE POLICE continued on **10 »**

Hanford Mayor Avoids Ouster

Catherine Doe

It was a full house at Hanford's City Council meeting on September 1. The crowd was a mix of angry residents over the actions of their mayor and the council considering selling part of Hidden Valley Park.

Hanford Mayor Russ Curry

The meeting started with Mayor Russ Curry apologizing to the council and community for reading four letters into the record at the August 18 meeting. The letters accused Councilmember Francisco Ramirez of lying about his background during the 2014 campaign and of using campaign contributions for his personal use, among other things.

"It was inappropriate reading the letters regarding Councilmember Ramirez," Curry said, "I was wrong."

Curry was found to be out of order because the letters were not relevant to city business. As a result, Councilmember Justin Mendes asked for the council to reorganize its September 1 meeting. Councilmembers Gary Pannett and Ramirez also voted in support.

The *Hanford Sentinel* received copies of the letters and determined that none of their authors were registered voters in Hanford, and might not even exist. Curry called each councilmember and apologized for his behavior. Because of his sincere apology, Mendes took the reorganization item off of the September 1 agenda.

After further analysis by the Hanford Sentinel, the letters appeared to be written by the same person. Residents in attendance questioned whether anyone actually told Curry to read the letters aloud for the record.

Though Curry's apology was accepted by all the council members, it didn't stop them, or the residents, from voicing their opinion. Ramirez said that it weighed heavily on his heart how Curry came into possession of the letters. Curry said that the letters were delivered together at his doorstep.

Councilmember Pannett said he had been getting calls and emails asking about the origin of the conflicts on the council. Because of Curry's actions, each one of the councilmembers have been under personal attack. Pannett also felt that Curry's actions were a slap in the face of Hanford residents. He suggested that at the next meeting they discuss a formal censure to show that the council takes Hanford residents seriously.

Dan Leon from Hanford spoke during public comment and said that the Hispanic community thought the way Ramirez was treated was a disgrace to the council. Leon started to recount stories of Curry's past career as a policeman in Corcoran and how the mayor had a reputation for treating Blacks horribly, but was stopped by Pannett on the grounds it was a personal attack. At the end of the meeting Councilman Ramirez expressed his gratitude for all the support he received during the meeting.

"My main goal, though, is that the city move forward," he said.

Traffic Delays Mean Cleaner Air, Safer Commutes

Work has begun on a roundabout at Farmersville Blvd. and Noble Ave. Nancy Vigran/ Valley Voice

Dave Adalian

Tulare County residents will be driving more like their European counterparts next spring, when a trio of roundabouts now under construction make their debuts in Farmersville and Woodlake.

In Woodlake, drivers can expect delays through the autumn and winter months at Naranjo Boulevard and Valencia Avenue while work continues at the city's busiest intersection. Construction should be complete in time for the city's biggest event, the Woodlake Lions Rodeo held annually during the Mother's Day weekend.

"You'll see a finished product in March or April," said Woodlake City Manager Ramon Lara of the $4.7 million project. "It's a complete rebuild of the intersection."

Measure R Funds at Work

When the work is complete, Woodlake's busiest crossroads will have undergone a total makeover, with new lighting, curbs, gutters, sidewalks and landscaping. It's an accomplishment Lara said the city could not attempt without the aid of taxpayers countywide, who voted in Measure R, a half-cent sales tax earmarked to pay for improvements to Tulare County's roads, in 2006.

The projects, however, are not intended just to improve traffic flow. Most of the money for construction came from the Federal Highway Administration's Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Improvement Program, which paid for the project in an effort to help reduce auto emissions from idling cars waiting their turn to cross.

"This is the biggest intersection here in Woodlake. We'd get some buildup,"

ROUNDABOUTS continued on **11 »**

Cash-Short Lindsay Council Under Fire

Dave Adalian

A crowd of angry city employees and citizens filled the chambers of the Lindsay City Council to overflowing on August 25, as workers came to air their upset over a hastily enacted furlough program and the city's residents reacted with dismay to the possibility of paying more for city services.

Facing a cash-flow crisis following the departure of its former city manager, Rich Wilkinson, as well as lawsuits by a former police officer and a group suing for alleged failure to maintain ADA access, City Hall gave workers notice of the cost-saving furloughs on August 14, only three days before the two-day work-stoppages began on August 17.

Meanwhile, with funds for sewer, water and refuse dwindling, the council is facing a backlash for rate increases it says it must have.

Employees Blame Council

Fernando Saenz, a 15-year veteran of the Lindsay City Services Department, blamed the furloughs on the council's failure to act, saying he believed they had been aware of the cash-crunch coming, but had done nothing to prevent it.

"I hold every one of you council members responsible for this furlough that's led to a 10% pay cut," he said. "I also hold the city management responsible."

Workers Left to Wonder

Saenz said he had received a letter from the city explaining why the furlough was needed, but not how large the gap was or how long the furloughs would last.

"There's no cash value on it," he said of the letter. "How much money are we talking about? We're not a bank you can come to and take some money to pay the city's bills. You say you're going to save $12,000 in every pay period. It comes out to $294,000 in a year. Again, we're not a bank that you just go to say I've got a problem, the city needs some money, and so you're going to take it from us."

LINDSAY continued on **5 »**

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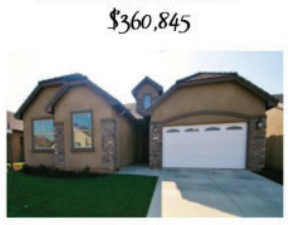

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FROM THE PUBLISHER'S DESK

Dial A Cliche

Some, in the pursuit of physical fitness, turn to running. Some would call that jogging. I, more accurately, stagger--although I do refer to it as a run. I try to run six days per week, and thus far it has helped keep me in decent shape. Decent, that is to say, if pear-shaped is acceptable. But in addition to any physical betterment, running--some say--is wonderful for clearing the mind. In my case, alas, it is not.

All manner of things trot through my head as I am running. Most, admittedly, are trivial--although I do occasionally try to retain the stray thought. Last week it occurred to me that, with the latest technology and social media, Punk Rock has at last attained half of its goals. Now anybody, whether a musician or not, can play any instrument whatsoever--however well--and secure an online audience.

I was just barely a teenager when the genre emerged in New York and London, and my very first thought was that it represented two things simultaneously: A venting of white-hot outrage over the socio-economic conditions of the time, and a democratization of music.

Kind of like Rock 'n Roll itself--at least originally.

But 20 years on things had changed. What began as a virtual garage band rebellion of youth--think "Summertime Blues"--had become, by the mid 1970's, thematically fed-up not only with a sense of hopelessness but with the futility its own sometimes anthemic music. Remember "Stairway To Heaven?" Remember Disco? Now think "God Save the Queen."

In 20 years' time, Rock 'n Roll had gone from youthful to corporate--a slickly marketed, vastly profitable glitzy package. Kind of like how it has remained.

And when the time came for the young to rebel against the music itself--hey, Presto! Punk Rock. It was only when the industry wanted their cut--albeit of a tamed product; a parody, really--that New Wave was foisted on us.

But something funny happened en route to the mediocrity that still plagues us: Indie Rock, among the first of whose bands was The Smiths.

I was still listening to Jimmy Buffet when The Smiths formed in Manchester, England in, 1982--and to this day think "Why Don't We Get Drunk and Screw?" should be our national anthem. But The Smiths brought something new to the turntable: More than a return to guitar-driven Rock, The Smiths' two songwriters--vocalist Morrissey and guitarist Johnny Marr--coupled a Punk sensibility with the tunesmithing of the original British Invasion. Kind of like how Cream, once upon a time, merged original Heavy Metal with literature-quality lyrics. In other words, you might hear a song about anything at all, and it would be socially relevant.

It would also be a good song: "Panic." "Girlfriend in a Coma." "Heaven Knows I'm Miserable Now." "There Is A Light That Never Goes Out."

The Smiths disbanded after five years, but Morrissey has enjoyed an ever-flourishing solo career since then. On August 29 he played to a sold-out Visalia Fox Theatre. The tickets were gone in a matter of hours.

And for good reason. What I like about Morrissey is that he has remained an interesting lyricist. We're not talking simple Pop here--the man always has something to convey. It's refreshing. I'm particularly tickled by the humor and sense of resignation Morrissey brings to whatever topic he puts his pen to, no matter the rage with which he is imbued. It's a good quality in an artist.

Let's face it: Art is about the conveyance of an idea. Any idea. And it doesn't necessarily have to be pretty, or well executed. Only good art does. The term "Abstract Art" is oxymoronic.

Oh--and Art for Art's sake? As Morrissey himself might say--although he did not perform that song last Saturday night--"Dial a Cliche."

— Joseph Oldenbourg

THE VALLEY VOICE IS YOUR NEWSPAPER

Published by The Valley Voice, LLC.

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"If music be the food of love, play on;
Give me excess of it, that, surfeiting,
The appetite may sicken, and so die."
Shakespeare

Political Fix

Catherine Doe

Vincent Salinas Running for Tulare County Board of Supervisors

Vincent Salinas of Visalia has filed his paperwork to run for Tulare County Board of Supervisors in District 1. Mr. Salinas has been an active member of the community in many capacities, including serving on Visalia's Planning Commission for 11 years. His map creating Visalia's five voting districts was one of the finalists considered by the city council.

District 1 in Tulare County should prove one of the more interesting races for the 2016 election because it will be an open seat. Supervisor Allen Ishida, who currently represents District 1, declared in May that he intends to run for Governor of California.

As is true for all candidates, Mr. Salinas' main issue will be water. I inquired as to what he plans on doing differently than what is already being done. He said, "Do you want to do some homework?" I said, "No."

He followed up by educating me about a study that cost $1.5 million, and took two years to complete, called the Disadvantaged Communities Tulare Lake Basin Study. I said that the board of supervisors has referred to that study several times when discussing water policy. But Mr. Salinas pointed out that at the end of the study there are several recommendations that have not been implemented, and are not yet being explored.

Mr. Salinas has read the 300-plus page study and said that it is time for the Tulare County Board of Supervisors to act.

"If you are going to spend $1.5 million on a study, then use their recommendations and expand on it," he said.

The other three issues on his platform are: public safety, improving the relationship between the county and cities, and economic development. For the last one, Mr. Salinas wants to stem the brain drain from Tulare County. He said we need to recruit research and development companies so that those residents with a college degree or higher stay in the county.

When asking Ruben Macareno, chair of the local Democratic Central Committee, if he had a comment on Mr. Salinas' candidacy, he said, "We would like a Democrat to run for that seat. Thus far we have no candidate in that race."

Not only do the Democrats have no candidates in any of the races, Democrats hold no political office in Tulare County except for three city council seats--two of which were appointed.

Mr. Salinas saw the open supervisor's seat as his opportunity to represent his district and serve his community. This is a non-partisan office, but everyone knows who is a Republican and who is Democrat, and if it is a viable candidate, we don't have to guess from which party they hail.

Amy Shuklian Introduces New Logo

Any Shuklian, Visalia City Council member and former mayor, has unveiled her new logo. She is running for Tulare County Supervisor, District 3--which encompasses Visalia--against Supervisor Phil Cox.

Ms. Shuklian has received some good news lately concerning her campaign. First, she received an early endorsement from former Visalia Police Chief Colleen Mestas.

Ms. Mestas said, "I have officially endorsed Amy Shuklian for Tulare County 2016. As Police Chief of the City of Visalia I saw Shuklian lead from the front and she is a huge supporter of Public Safety. I believe in her ability to connect with County residents and ensure the quality of life thatSupervisor for 2016. As Police Chief of the City of Visalia I saw Shuklian lead from the front and she is a huge supporter of Public Safety. I believe in her ability to connect with County residents and ensure the quality of life that is deserved."

Ms. Shuklian also received quite a complimentary shout-out from both the Point/Counterpoint columnists for the *Visalia Times-Delta*. Joe Altschule said that "every once in a while a talented hard-working and compelling candidate challenges an incumbent and knocks him off. That's precisely what is going to happen…." After a glowing review he added, "She will be a breath of fresh air on the board of supervisors."

Strangely enough, Tom Fife didn't exactly disagree with his opponent. He plans on voting for Supervisor Cox but said he also liked Ms. Shuklian and believed she would do a good job.

Even though she has received some impressive words of support the good ole' boys' club is alive and well in Tulare County. There is no smoking gun against Supervisor Phil Cox, except maybe Mooney Grove. Mr. Cox may be stubborn and rankle people, but not enough for this incumbent to lose his supervisor's seat.

Can Devon Mathis Keep His Assembly Seat?

During the November 2014 election for State Assembly District 26, Rudy Mendoza had all of the money and was backed by the entire Republican establishment in the district. Yet, having little money and fewer endorsements, Devon Mathis pulled off a victory.

His victory was solid, but his first year? Not so much. Has Mr. Mathis been able to rise above his underdog status? Looking at the media coverage and staff turnover, among other things, the preliminary answer would have to be, "No."

He had an inauspicious start, getting little press, having no permanent district office, and an inexperienced staff--four of whom are gone--and it hasn't even been a year. The *Valley Voice* covered all of Mr. Mathis' local events, that is when we knew about them. But it took the *Visalia Times-Delta* (VTD) nearly six months to stop listing Connie Conway as the 26th District representative. As of August 31, the VTD was still not listing Mr. Mathis in their "Contact your Representative" information box. It is unclear whether the incompetency lies at the feet of the VTD or Mr. Mathis' staff, or lack thereof.

By June of this year Mr. Mathis was still in search of a permanent district

POLITICAL FIX continued on **4 »**

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Devon Mathis Addresses Tea Party

Catherine Doe

At the Central Valley Tea Party meeting on August 20, a special guest speaker attended--Assemblyman Devon Mathis. Mathis took the time to review the several bills he has introduced which are in the process of going through the legislature. Most of his bills concentrate on the drought because, as he said, "I haven't paid attention to a whole lot else."

Mathis started his talk with a short video about how the drought has affected Tulare County, focusing on East Porterville. He has effectively used the video when recruiting democrats to cosign his drought relief bills. A current bill, Low-Interest Loan and Grant Program for Homeowner Water and Wastewater Improvements, will make it easier for private homeowners whose wells have gone dry to get state and federal funds. They can use the money not only to drill a deeper or new well but to hook up to local water systems.

Up until now funds have only been available for community wells, leaving private homeowners with limited resources.

"Those individual homeowners who rely upon private groundwater wells are often in disadvantaged communities and economically distressed areas, and so may not be able to afford conventional private financing to undertake vital water supply, water quality and wastewater improvements," said Mathis' fact sheet on the bill.

After showing the video to State Senator Ricardo Lara, Mathis is confident his bill will pass the senate and be signed by Governor Jerry Brown.

Another bill he is working on include the GI Bill for Vet Startup Businesses. Traditional GI Bills focus on providing college money to veterans. This bill is for veterans who may not want to go to college but do want to start a business. This bill would provide the startup money for their business.

Devon Mathis speaks at the Central Valley Tea Party's August 20 meeting. Catherine Doe/Valley Voice

Mathis is also collaborating with the only elected republican in the Bay Area, Catherine Baker, on a bill that "resolves that the legislature calls upon the state and local governments to prohibit any government entity in the state from banning the American flag from public property…" Mathis cites a recent incident at the University of California, Irvine that the student government was pursuing efforts to ban the American flag and other flags from the lobby of a student government office.

"When I hear that the American flag is a sign of imperialism I call it bullshit. I did not fight and bleed for the American flag to have it called offensive," said Mathis.

After Mathis concluded his presentation, he took a few questions. One audience member asked him what he thought of the August 6 Republican debate. Neither the Central Valley Tea Party or Mathis was prepared to endorse anyone right now. And Mathis has more questions after seeing the debate.

Another person asked about the recent undercover videos revealing Planned Parenthood's selling fetal body parts and wanted to know what Mathis was doing about California's Planned Parenthood. Mathis said that on August 3, he and 12 other California State Legislators signed a letter calling for a complete audit of Planned Parenthood. The letter inquired as to the extent to which California tax revenues were used in the illegal purchase or sale of human fetal tissue and the extent to which these monies have been used in abortion procedures in which the patient's consent was either violated or fraudulently induced.

Mathis was next asked what he was doing about the High-Speed Rail (HSR.) Mathis said that "if we need to create jobs, then why not do it building roads and water infrastructure rather than wasting it on High -Speed Rail."

He said, the rail was destroying farm land and will go right through a Hormel Food installation near Alpaugh which will have to be torn down.

Supervisor Phil Cox, who was in attendance, added that the federal money given to California "goes away if not spent by High-Speed Rail by next year," when referring to how slowly HSR was progressing. He also said that California has to front the money being spent on HSR.

"We only get it after it's built but not before," said Cox, who is on the Tulare County Association of Governments Rail Committee.

Mathis added that a rumor in Sacramento was that Governor Brown is advocating raising a tax to fix the roads but then will take it and spend the tax increase on HSR.

Mathis concluded, "If you want change then get republicans elected."

Someone in the audience yelled out that social media was the way to get republicans elected and urged everyone in attendance "to get their wives to spend some of their time on facebook 'liking' your republican representatives."

Mathis ended the HSR discussion by saying there was a rumor circulating around Sacramento that when Governor Brown was a young boy his father Gov. Pat Brown took away his toy train.

Political Fix

Continued from p. 3

office. The plan, if Mr. Mendoza had won, was for Assemblywoman Connie Conway to just hand over the keys to her Church Street office in the Bank of America Building to him. When Mr. Mathis won instead, the same courtesy was not extended. In fact the rental manager said Mr. Mathis could not have his district office in that building. Ms. Conway has insisted that she has nothing to do with her office's lease, but it is clear that someone in power did not want Mr. Mathis to get it.

Just as troubling has been Mr. Mathis' staffing problems. Not only did it take half the year to find a district office, but he hasn't been able to keep it staffed. While most members of the assembly have four or five district staff, Mr. Mathis has one, with seemingly little discernable experience.

His Sacramento office has fared no better.

The last weekend in July, my daughter and I took a getaway to Sacramento, and Devon Mathis' Chief of Communications, Amanda Morello, gave us a tour of the capitol. We arrived at room 5126, the office known as the "doghouse." Ms. Morello pulled out a plaque from a drawer that had every representative's name who had occupied the notoriously tiny basement office. She seemed to really enjoy working for Mr. Mathis and said that you could hear the laughter down the hall because the staff had so much fun.

Ms. Morrello was gone less than a week later. She said that she resigned.

An anonymous source informed me that, "They all say they resigned…. But they were canned."

It's not clear if it is an apathetic media, lack of experience, office assignment, or just bad luck, but Mr. Mathis has exposed himself as a vulnerable for 2016. He has shown a weakness in the very thing he campaigned on--excellent management skills. Mr. Mathis says his intention is to serve 12 years in the Assembly--six two-year terms. The 26th District is about as reliably Republican as they come, but it won't be a Democrat coming up from behind to take his seat. He will be battling his own party to stay in Sacramento.

One last anecdotal story: I was perusing the Porterville Chamber of Commerce website to do research on an article and Devon Mathis' contact information came up. So, out of curiosity, I clicked on the link to his website, and gosh darn it if Assemblywoman Shannon Grove's website didn't pop up instead. I chuckled, but I wasn't surprised.

When a Cigar Isn't Just a Cigar

During the last month I have found myself explaining the Libertarian elements of the Tea Party to my teenage daughter because of the impending presidential election. I said that mainstream Tea Partiers push for fiscal responsibility, less taxes and less government, especially when it comes to do with anything that smells of Big Brother. I told her they also consider the Constitution the highest law of the land and believe in the God-given right of private property.

So she declared herself a Jewish Tea Partier: Jewish because she doesn't think that our savior has come to Earth yet, and a Tea Partier because she's a teenager and she doesn't like to be told what to do.

I therefore took her to a Tea Party meeting and she was the youngest one there. The meeting started out with general announcements about upcoming Republican events like the Lincoln Dinner and Tea Party members handing out mini Constitutions on Constitution Day to local schools. But when the speaker announced that everyone was meeting Saturday at the Fresno Planned Parenthood to protest, with their ultimate goal of shutting them all down--that's when they lost her.

She leaned in to me and asked, "When I go to college where am I supposed to go for healthcare?" I assured her that Republicans will never shut down Planned Parenthood on the West Coast, so no worries.

Still, there was something jarring about people whose childbearing years were 20 or more years in the rear-view mirror cheering the demise of vital services for young women like my daughter. If Planned Parenthood clinics close, where are women supposed to get healthcare during their reproductive years? When women have to work and raise a family without healthcare, the ones who suffer the most are the kids.

The Tea Party's newest outrage with Planned Parenthood is that they believe the organization is trafficking baby parts. In reality, Planned Parenthood is recovering the costs of transporting fetal tissue to medical facilities. This is the same fetal tissue that the number two in the polls for the Republican presidential nomination, Dr. Ben Carson, has said he has used himself, and says is needed for medical research. Lastly, Planned Parenthood spends our tax money providing healthcare for women. Only 3% of their resources are used for abortions, none of which come from taxes, but rather from donations.

I told my daughter that I didn't get into the emotional issues when discussing the Tea Party with her, like same-sex marriage and abortion, so she could make up her own mind. Through our recent trip to Sacramento she learned that the Tea Party is against mandatory vaccination. She wondered, if Tea Partiers don't want to be told to vaccinate their children, then why would the Tea Party tell her when to have a baby and who to marry? How is that Libertarian?

Then there is the issue of the Constitution. Dr. Carson was being interviewed by CNN and he reiterated his belief that the United States is a land of laws and the Constitution is the law of the land. If the Tea Party keeps copies of the Constitution on hand at every meeting, then how can they support the number one in the polls for the Republican nomination, Donald Trump? The Donald is waging a direct attack on the Constitution by saying he will get rid of the 14th Amendment, which says that anyone born in the United States is an American citizen. If they can get rid of the 14th Amendment, then can the rest of civilized society bring the 2nd Amendment into the 21st Century and get rid

Kennedy Meadows Development Gets Zoning Change to Build Homes

Development in the pipeline since 2007

Catherine Doe

Kennedy Meadows in relation to the rest of Tulare County. Map courtesy Google Maps.

Where else could you drive for three-and-a-half hours and still be in Tulare County? That would be Kennedy Meadows, located at about 6,200 feet in the southern Sierra Nevada. Recently made famous in Cheryl Strayed's *Wild*, Kennedy Meadows is equipped with several campgrounds, rustic cabins and a lodge with a grocery store and a restaurant, but precious little else--and some people want it to stay that way.

The Tulare County Board of Supervisors held a public hearing on August 25 about a zone change that might lead to a housing development in Kennedy Meadows. Plans for the new development have been in the pipeline since 2007. The Tulare County Planning Commission rejected a plan that included 64 lots with a commercial development. That plan was modified to 12 lots composed of 8 lots of 20 acres each, and four lots of 10 acres each, with no commercial development. Fighting over a development of 12 homes may seem almost silly to an urban dweller, but to those who families homesteaded Kennedy Meadows in the 1800's, it means changing their way of life.

Not all of the old-timers and full-time residents are against the development. Some say welcome a little change and commercial development as a possibility of more things to do, and a few more people to do them with. But without the basic services of electricity, sewer or the ability to log onto Facebook, it seems hard to imagine Kennedy Meadows will ever change. With this in mind the Resource Management Agency (RMA) recommended that the Tulare County Board of Supervisors (TCBOS) approve the zone change.

After the RMA's presentation 16 people participated in the public hearing, 12 were for the rezoning while four were against. Mike Washam, assistant director of RMA, said that from the letters he received there were a few more against the zone change than in favor.

Of the four who attended the meeting, who are against approving the new zoning, only one was a fulltime resident. The main opposition was that attracting people to 10 and 20-acre lots, versus the current minimum of 40 acres, will change their way of life. The people who live and vacation in Kennedy Meadows say they are concerned about light and noise pollution from all the generators, and the trampling of pristine lands. They are also concerned with a new housing development's disrupting the experience of those hiking the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT).

One land owner said the situation is already out of control with people building whatever they want and running their generators and lights all night. Because of the lack of services, seasonal visitors bring their own gasoline, food, building materials and generators. These part-timers don't support the local economy and break-ins have become more common. The current codes are already not enforced because there is no one to police them. Add more residents and the situation could get worse, they say.

Grumpy Bear's, the only restaurant in Kennedy Meadows.

The one resident who came to testify explained that when you keep lots at 40 acres or more you attract a rural type of person. The fulltime resident said she has 160 acres where she has a one-room cabin and a trailer. She said that Kennedy Meadows is a gift and that she wants to keep it that way. Another speaker against the zone change said that the issue about the Indian artifacts has not been addressed. The property that is proposed to be developed sits right up against a piece of land that has never been touched and still contains artifacts. She also wanted to know how the RMA plans on protecting the Indian bedrock mortars next to the possible development.

Those in favor of the zone change said that there are just a handful of people who want to keep everyone out. The speakers all agreed that anyone who moves or vacations on a 10-acre plot in an area with no services, in the middle of the wilderness, is going to be just as conscientious as someone who owns a 40-acre plot. They say that Kennedy Meadows will never be crowded and it would even be a stretch to say it might reach 300 people in the next few decades. The additional development might also be good for Kennedy Meadows and add more control over the unruly and remote area.

Mark Forrest, from Southern California, said he takes his family camping in Kennedy Meadows and eats at Grumpy Bear, the only restaurant. He has made a lot of family memories up there and would like to buy a 10-acre lot. He said they enjoy the dark night skies and stargazing.

"That's why we like it and we want to preserve it," he said.

Forrest pointed out that anyone who is the type of person to buy up there is going to want to deep Kennedy Meadows the way it is.

Carol Jacobs, another resident, said that those who live there would like a few more services and the new development might bring some. She said the one resident's property, who is against the zone change, looks right down on the proposed new development. Jacobs said that Kennedy Meadows is a place where middle income families can buy a vacation home and get the opportunity to own a little piece of heaven.

While there are about 70 fulltime residents in the summer, according to the 2010 census, there were only 28 permanent residents in Kennedy Meadows. The census is traditionally done in February, so that might account for the low number. The PCT is located two miles from the new development and a mile from the Kennedy Meadows Lodge. It has become a popular restocking point for northbound hikers. Kennedy Meadows was featured in the movie *Wild*, based on the bestselling book, about Strayed's three-month solo journey from Mexico to Canada along the PCT.

The Tulare County Board of Supervisors decided to accept RMA's recommendation and voted 5-0 for the zoning change.

Lindsay

Continued from p. 1

Union Involved

The move prompted workers to file a letter of grievance with the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) which represents some of the city's employees.

"We've made it clear (to City Hall) the SEIU does not agree with the furloughs, has asked that they be ceased and desisted," said Jose Segal, internal organizer for SEIU. "So we're working on avenues in regards to that process."

Beyond discussions with management, Segal did not say what measures the union might employ. He did, however, emphasize the shock workers felt at receiving short notice of the furlough. He was also critical of the city's handling of the matter.

"It's very difficult for a lot of employees to be notified at 4 o'clock on a Friday that the next week they're going to get home furlough," he said. "It's not necessarily the best way to deal with it."

City Looking for Revenue

With insufficient money coming in and cash reserves running out, the City Council began contemplating raising the rates it charges for sewer, water and refuse service in March. The August 25 hearing before the Council's final decision drew angry complaints from the public for nearly an hour.

The rate increase is needed, said Interim City Manager Bill Zigler, to fund maintenance and cover increased operating costs.

"We've done a good job of reducing the amount of salaries that are connected to it dollar-wise. What we're finding is just the plan is failing," he said, adding the city's water treatment facility hasn't been upgraded in decades. "It's 20 years old. Stuff is failing. Costs have gone up. And, this stuff has to be self-funding. We don't get to ask someone else to pay for this."

Complaints from those who would pay the rate increases focused mainly on the impact the extra expense would have on the city's large low-income population. The city received 393 written protests against the rate increases. Under the rules laid out under Prop. 218, 1,290 written protests would have to have been lodged to prevent the council from considering increased rates.

The council voted 3-2 to approve the increases. Dissenting were Mayor Pro-Tem Rosaena Sanchez and Councilman Steve Mecum. The largest change will be in sewer rates, which will rise $6.86 a month to $36.88. Refuse customers will see rates rise by $1.14 to $22.73. Commercial recycling will go up $1.56 to $31.71. The changes will not go into effect until the end of the year.

Unexpected Expenses

One source of the city's financial embarrassment became clear when it was reported the city will settle a wrongful dismissal suit with former police officer Bryan Clower.

"The parties have agreed to settle the case instead of going to trial," said Mario Zamora, Lindsay city attorney. "The terms are that the city will pay the plaintiff $90,000 between now and Dec. 15."

Clower claimed in a deposition three members of the Council, Mayor Ramona Villarreal-Padilla, Mayor Pro-Tem Rosaena Sanchez and Councilman Steve Mecum, had encouraged him to file his suit in an effort to discredit Wilkinson, who was then city manager. Wilkinson has since left his position, and the city has agreed to pay him more than $240,000 in compensation over the next two years.

Water Restrictions Approved

Also on August 25, the Council unanimously approved adding two phases to its water conservation program. The newly adopted law means residents will now be limited to two watering days per week during limited hours of those days. The limits also apply to washing cars and refilling pools. Those days could be eliminated if the city is forced into even harsher measures by the continuing drought.

Those who violate the new restrictions face fines of up to $250.

Agriculture

It's Final — Tulare County Agriculture is Number One

Catherine Doe

When the agriculture commissioner, Marilyn Kinoshita, announced Tulare County's production numbers a few weeks ago it was assumed that Tulare County would be the number one agriculture producer in the nation. That assumption was confirmed last week when Fresno County released its 2014 production numbers.

Fresno County's agriculture production for 2014 was $7.03 billion, which set a record for the county, but did not surpass Tulare County or Kern County. Tulare County produced $8.1 billion, while Kern County's agriculture production was valued at $7.5 billion.

Tulare County's securing the number one spot was not uniformly met with elation. Tricia Stever Blattler, executive director of the Tulare County Farm Bureau, said that Fresno's reduced numbers are due to the drought, which is not something to celebrate. Ryan Jacobsen, Fresno County Farm Bureau chief executive officer, said he was frustrated because he felt that Fresno County's production numbers should be two or three billion dollars more than it is. This sentiment was partially confirmed by a recent Fresno State study that showed how the drought was affecting the San Joaquin Valley. Researchers estimated that losses in farm revenue to be as much as $3.3 billion throughout the Valley.

Fresno has much more arable land than Tulare County and has dominated the number one spot for years. But Fresno had to fallow 250,000 productive acres. Another contributing factor was poor prices for field crops. Still, the drought wasn't the only reason that Tulare County overtook Fresno and Kern County for the second year in a row. While Kern and Fresno counties top crops are grapes and almonds, Tulare County has significantly more dairies and milk prices experienced record highs in 2014.

Fresno Agriculture Commissioner Les Wright said he believes that if Fresno County had water they would be ranked number 1 or 2.

But, Tulare County's dairy production eclipsed their number one crop, almonds, by more than a billion dollars. Even without the effects of the drought, the number one spot would have still have been a horse race between all three counties.

Tulare County — *$8bn*

Top commodities:

- Milk $2.53bn
- Cattle $980m
- Oranges $963m

Kern County — *$7.5bn*

Top commodities:

- Grapes $1.71bn
- Almonds $1.48bn
- Milk $915m

Fresno County — *$7bn*

Top commodities:

- Almonds $1.30bn
- Grapes $905m
- Poultry $655m

Most of U.S. Rented Farmland is Owned by Non-Farmers

Agricultural producers rented and farmed 353.8 million acres of farmland, according to the results of the 2014 Tenure, Ownership, and Transition of Agricultural Land (TOTAL) survey results released today by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS). Of these acres, 80 percent are owned by non-farming landlords.

According to the survey results, rented farmland acres, combined with buildings on this land, are valued at more than $1.1 trillion. TOTAL counted approximately 2.1 million landlords with various ownership arrangements. In 2014, all of the landlords combined received $31.2 billion in rental income while incurring $9.2 billion in total expenses.

A tenth of the 911 million U.S. farmland acres outside of Alaska and Hawaii, or about 91.5 million acres, is slated for ownership transfer in the next five years, not including farmland that is in or is expected to be put into wills. Landlords expect to keep or put nearly 48 percent of these acres in trusts. Only 21 million acres of land are expected to be sold to a non-relative, while 26 million acres are expected to be sold to a relative or given as a gift. This means that only a small percentage of farmland will be available for new entrants into the farming sector.

"Farmland has always been a valuable resource, but what we see in the most recent TOTAL results is the emergence of farmland as a future investment," said Joseph T. Reilly, NASS Administrator. "More families are creating trust ownerships to make sure land remains in their family for farming or as an investment."

In addition to looking at farmland, TOTAL also provides a glimpse into demographic information for 1.4 million

FARMLAND continued on **7 »**

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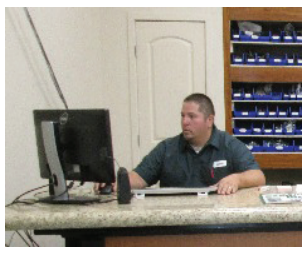

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Agriculture

South Valley Olive Groves Continue to Decline with Increasing Importation

Nancy Vigran

What once was a thriving agricultural commodity in California has dwindled down to a few hold-outs in the olive industry. There used to be 18,000 acres planted with olives in Tulare County, said Adin Hester, president and CEO of the Olive Growers Council, which is based in Visalia. Now there are just 10,000 and that number is expected to continue its descent.

Similarly, the number of commercial canneries has taken a major fall from nine in 1977, to two, Bell-Carter Foods in Corning, which carries the Lindsay Olive label, and Musco in Tracy. There were once 29 canneries in California, Hester said.

"Imports from Spain and Morocco have pretty much taken over the food supply market," he said.

Olives used in restaurant salad bars and as pizza toppings, as well as those in cooking, are almost all imported.

"And now, imports are trying to work into the grocery market as well," he added.

They are not the same. California grows different varieties than the imports, and often those sold to the food supply market are not table olives, but rather oil olives, which have a different flavor, he said.

"We have a much better tasting table olive than they do," Hester said.

There are advantages and disadvantages to growing olives versus other tree crops.

Olives are a desert shrub, the trees will live through the drought even when not irrigated, Hester said. But, they will not produce fruit without water. Many growers in the Terra Bella area, who together have about 2,000 acres of olive trees, will not have a harvest this year. But their trees will live on.

Olive trees have a very long life and will continue to produce, when watered. Trees alternate quality production from year-to-year. One year a tree will see very good production, while the next it will produce only a minimal amount. This can lead to an unstable harvest.

One year, an acre may produce four to five tons of olives, while the next it may only produce two, Hester said.

Olives are also expensive to harvest. The older orchards are planted for hand-harvesting, which is labor intensive and expensive, Hester said.

And without much of a market for domestic olives, the expense is not worth the return, at this time.

Many growers have opted to tear out their olives and replace them with nut trees, Hester said, which demand a much higher price.

There are some hold-outs, though. While agriculture is a business, there is also the element of family tradition, and some olives groves are as old, or older, than those maintaining them.

Vito DeLeonardis' family has been growing olives in Tulare County since the 1950's, when his grandfather moved here from Italy.

"We want to keep this a viable business and we don't want it to go away," he said.

DeLeonardis maintains approximately 250 acres in olives, mostly the Manzanilla variety. Most of the olives go to the cannery, he said, while a very small percentage are used to make the family's olive oil. The locally produced oil is sold in local markets and farmers markets.

Most of the DeLeonardis olive trees are fairly young, he said, having planted many trees in the 1990's.

"They are right in their prime," he said.

Admittedly, DeLeonardis has diversified, also growing citrus and almonds, but he hangs on to the idea that olives should stay a California commodity.

"It's a good product," he said, "and hopefully it will survive here."

Other local businesses in the industry include Armstrong Olives in Porterville and Bari Olive Oil Company in Dinuba.

A lot of the olive growers' problems stem from politics, both DeLeonardis and Hester said.

Hester sited the US promising Morocco some $300 million in aid to stimulate agriculture there, just a few years ago, allowing growers there to revive their trees, while there is no help for local olive growers with the drought, or anything else, he said.

"No one called me about it," he said.

Morocco is the second largest competitor for the olive market, with Spain being the first.

Ripening olives in Exeter. Nancy Vigran/ Valley Voice

"It all has to do with politics," DeLeonardis said.

The olive harvest traditionally begins around Labor Day. Hester is currently working out demands and pricing for local growers with the canneries.

And, while it may not seem like a good investment now, Hester hopes that growers will continue to consider olives into the future. New plantings should take into consideration a change in harvesting techniques utilizing shakers. It will be more labor intensive to grow trees with taller trunks, but it will reduce time and expense for harvest, he said.

CSET Hosted Drought Resource Fair on August 27

More than 125 community members attended CSET's Drought Resource Center resource fair on August 27.

Families received information on drought-related services and programs, and other family resources. Community partner booths included: CalFresh, Family Health Care Network, Covered California, the Employment Development Department, the Tulare County Employment Connection (a proud partner of America's Job Center of California network), and CSET's recycling, drought services, LiHEAP, and senior services program.

Community members had access to ice cold water, refreshments and the company of neighbors and Porterville residents. Drought Resource Center staff assisted families in signing up for the bottled water program, loading more than 85 cases of water throughout the evening. Supervisor Mike Ennis was present to support the community and the resource center in its efforts to alleviate the impact of the severe drought.

The Drought Resource Center provides a wide variety of services and referrals for residents impacted by the drought. On the premises are free public showers, sinks and portable toilets. CSET also operates an office on site, which provides information and referral services to local residents. Furthermore, the bottled water pick-up, household tank installation and bottled water delivery programs are available at the Drought Resource Center.

In addition to operating the Drought Resource Center, CSET has been installing 2,500 to 3,000 gallon tanks and pumps at qualified houses.

"We are very pleased to be assisting local residents as they navigate this difficult time," stated Mary Alice Escarsega-Fechner, CSET's executive director. "Our goal is to provide residents with as much information and access to services as possible."

Regularly scheduled services, including showers and water pick-up, were available during the open house.

For questions or more information, contact the Drought Resource Center (559) 667-9309.

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Farmland

Continued from p. 6

non-farming individuals and principals in partnerships arrangements, also known as principal landlords. According to the findings, the average age of these landlords is 66.5 years old. This age exceeds that of the average farmer, who is 58.3 years old, according to the most recent Census of Agriculture. Only 18 percent of all principal landlords were under 55 years old.

TOTAL, which NASS conducted in cooperation with USDA's Economic Research Service (ERS), surveyed farmland ownership in 48 contiguous states. It is the only NASS survey that collects agricultural landlord data. The survey is expected to greatly contribute to research and policy analysis. Farmland ownership and decisions stemming from ownership arrangements are key issues for which ERS serves as a primary source of information.

"Access to land is one of the biggest challenges facing agricultural producers, particularly beginning farmers," said Mary Bohman, ERS Administrator. "TOTAL gives us a chance to demonstrate the extent of the land access issue and provide realistic projections of future land availability for purchase or for rent."

To access the complete 2014 TOTAL results, in addition to key data highlights, methodology, and Frequently Asked Questions, visit http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/TOTAL/ or the Quick Stats database at http://quickstats.nass.usda.gov.

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4-H and FFA Members Ready to Show at the Tulare County Fair

Nancy Vigran

There are close to 1,800 total 4-H and Future Farmers of America (FFA) entries in the Tulare County Fair this year. A small niche of those come from the Fernandes family, members of Oakdale 4-H in Tulare.

The Fernandes' are a family of dairy farmers. It is only natural that their children are involved in the dairy division of 4-H and FFA. But this does not mean they have any advantage over other children, as they have to follow the same rules, regulations and procedures as anyone else.

Each year, the Fernandes fathers and uncles select 25-30 young cows and then it is up to the children to choose their own project cow. The same is true for other 4-H Oakdale members who participate in dairy livestock.

Maddie Fernandes, 13, and her brother, Frankie, 10, each chose a Jersey calf to begin their new project. Dairy projects are two-year stints--actually 18 months--in which the 4-H member raises a calf into a young cow, gets her bred, and eventually sells her either while pregnant and ready to calf, or having just calved prior to sale.

Many of those involved in dairy projects have more than one project cow at a time – one in the first year and one in the second. They may also have cows of more than one breed. However, they must choose one cow to show in showmanship; that cow and the others may each be shown in their perspective breed class.

The Fernandes family dairy houses Jerseys and Holsteins. Maddie chooses Jerseys, she said, "Because the Holsteins are just too big for me."

She has been in 4-H since she was in kindergarten and has shown for the past four years, having sold two of her cows at auction to date.

Maddie and Frankie's older sister, Hayley, was also involved in 4-H and has now become quite active in FFA since starting at Mission Oak High School.

Unlike her younger siblings, Hayley chooses Holstein's to work with, although they are a little harder to keep clean, she said.

Starting a new cow takes quite a bit of time.

"During the summer, we come out (to the dairy) all most every day," Hayley said. "Now that school has started, we come out twice on the weekend, and as much during the week as we can."

Starting around the first of July, those involved in Oakdale 4-H and Mission Oak FFA dairy projects start getting their new project animals used to them. A good bonding time is bath time, Hayley said. While some baths are just a hose-off to cool the animals down, Holstein's take more shampooing time to keep their white areas from staining.

The animals are walked for about 30 minutes per session to get them accustomed to the procedures that will be required in the ring for showmanship, as well as breed and age competitions. They are also taught to stand properly to show off their best features.

Hayley has become quite involved in showing and plans a future in the dairy business as well as maintaining a show string of her own. She has started her own prefix name "Haisley," and her future calves will use that prefix in their registered names.

"I most definitely will be in some aspect of the dairy business," she said.

Cousins Luke Fernandes, 11, Jacob Fernandes, 13, and friend Arie Prins, 13, also show.

Prins said he started showing after his sister showed one of Maddie Fernandes' cows.

"I thought I'd try it," he said, and he has become hooked.

He was not new to cows, as his family has a business building specified machinery for dairies, he said. But he was new to working with them and showing them.

Like many 4-H members, Prins is into other aspects of the club, including metal working, for which his father is leader.

"I like 4-H," he said, "because you get to choose what activity you get to do."

As such, Luke Fernandes enjoys shooting sports more than most other activities, he said. Shooting sports have their own competition and is not offered at the fair.

Jacob Fernandes is very active in showmanship and won the showmanship class for his age group at the 4-H Fair in April. He then competed against other age group winners in a round-robin, in which the group winners show other types of livestock beyond what they had exhibited on their own. Jacob also won the Supreme Championship Dairy Cattle division at the 4-H Fair, which was held during the Antique Farm Equipment Show.

Mission Oak FFA member Hayley Fernandes bathes her Holsteins often to keep them from staining. She will be showing five dairy cow entries at this year's Tulare County Fair. Nancy Vigran/Valley Voice

Some Oakdale 4-H exhibitors at the Tulare County Fair will include (l to r) cousins Jacob Fernandes, Maddie Fernandes, Frankie Fernandes, Luke Fernandes and family friend, Arie Prins. Nancy Vigran/Valley Voice

It is important, Jacob said, to avoid getting infraction points.

A slight infraction could be putting a halter on incorrectly, walking the course incorrectly or carrying a cellphone in your back pocket, he said.

A moderate would be hitting an animal inappropriately and a severe infraction resulting in disqualification would be doing that repeatedly, he said.

"There's a lot of responsibility and there is a risk," said Jerod Fernandes, Jacob's father. "Something could happen to the cow, or she may not become pregnant, or could abort (at which point she could not be offered for auction)."

Each 4-H member must purchase their own livestock. In dairy, that is about a $1,200 investment. Then, they are responsible for feeding the animal and any veterinary costs. By the time the cow is ready for sale, there is $2,000 or more invested in her, and she may sell for around $2,500. With any luck, the 4-H member may make a small profit.

Natalie Mederos has been community leader of Oakdale 4-H for 25 years. She and her husband became quite active when their children were involved and have remained so, now seeing their grandchildren following in their footsteps.

Oakdale has close to 100 members, Mederos said, of which about one-third participate in the Tulare County Fair and one-half participate in the 4-H Fair. Most are involved in livestock including dairy, cattle, hogs, sheep and rabbits. Many have an interest in shooting sports and photography. Still others participate in other indoor activities including scrapbooking, jams and jellies, cake decorating and other baking and crafts.

Her granddaughter, Michaela, is involved in hogs, photography and cake decorating.

"4-H is great for the kids," Mederos said. "and they put their all into it."

There is a lot of community service involved in 4-H too, she said.

"If they really put themselves out, they really benefit from it," she said.

Tulare County 4-H had 14 active clubs with 832 children for the year 2014-2015, said Rochelle Mederos, 4-H program representative for Tulare County. Adult volunteer involvement is 270. Children must be between 5-19 years of age to be a 4-H member. Adult volunteers must be 18 or older and cannot still be enrolled as a member. Chaperones are 21 years and older.

"The upcoming Tulare County Fair is an opportunity for 4-H member to show off what they learned and produced during the past (2014-2015) 4-H Youth Development Program year," Rochelle Mederos said.

Enrollment information can be found at: http://ucanr.edu/sites/4-H_Tulare/ Interested youth and adults should contact the local club leaders for more information about projects offered, meeting times and enrollment procedures.

Entries for the Tulare County Fair have closed. There are 592 total 4-H entries for the fair, 495 of which are in the livestock division. There are 1,201 FFA entries, 1172 of which are in the livestock division, according to fair staff.

Judging of livestock and indoor exhibits starts on Wednesday, September 16. The Junior Livestock Sale will be held on Saturday, September 19 at 9am. For more information, visit www.tcfair.org.

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Tulare County Starts Process to Buy Cigna Building

Catherine Doe

At the August 25 Tulare County Board of Supervisors' meeting, the board voted to open escrow for the purchase of the Cigna building on Akers and Tulare Avenue and across from the Lifestyles Gym. The sales price for the two-story, 180,679-square-foot building is $16.97 million. The county intends to make this a cash deal.

Cigna is currently utilizing half of the building and their lease is up in June, 2016. They intend to sign a new 10-year lease that would generate an additional $1.3 million income for the county. In the event they do not, the purchase price would go down. About 76,000 square feet of the building would be left for use by the county. What the county would use the building for has not yet been decided.

The county also has the option to back out of the escrow anytime if something changes in the contract.

Supervisor Phil Cox said that the sales price translates into $94 per square foot, and that the county could never replicate a building like that for that price.

Supervisor Allen Ishida said that in 2007 the county was exploring the idea of building another county building on Burrell next and the price would be $300 per square foot. He also said he was grateful there was not another buyer waiting in the wings or the price would be much higher.

Supervisor Pete Vander Poel reminded those attending the meeting that, when the county bought the Nationwide Insurance building, which is now the Government Plaza across from Mooney Grove, the county had to borrow every dime.

The Cigna building is bigger, there is more parking, and it can handle the needs of the County for decades.

"It makes it an even better deal when we don't have to borrow," said Vander Poel.

Fitch Upgrades Tulare Local Health Care District (CA) Revs to 'BB-'

Fitch Ratings has upgraded the rating on $14,725,000 series 2007 fixed rate bonds issued by the Tulare Local Health Care District d/b/a Tulare Regional Medical Center (TRMC) to 'BB-' from 'B'.

The Rating Outlook is Stable.

SECURITY

Debt payments are secured by a pledge of the gross revenues of Tulare Local Health Care District. A fully funded debt service reserve fund provides additional security for bondholders.

KEY RATING DRIVERS

STABILIZATION ACHIEVED: The upgrade to 'BB-' from 'B' reflects sustained evidence of operational and financial turnaround and stabilization. Following three years of large operating losses, TRMC posted positive monthly operating income since April 2014. Operating margin of 10.6% in fiscal 2015 (unaudited interim results; June 30 year-end) was supported by volume growth, improved payor mix, enhanced revenues, and expense control, the benefits of which are likely to be ongoing.

PROGRESS ON CONSTRUCTION PLANS: The Stable Outlook reflects Fitch's expectation that long-term financing will be secured to complete TRMC's current tower construction project. The hospital district board recently voted to have a $55 million public financing measure go to voters within the hospital district. Should the transaction be approved, TRMC should be able to complete its tower project without relying on the hospital's revenue stream. Also, progress has been made to the tower construction over the last year despite limited funding sources, and the building is now fully enclosed and sealed.

VERY HIGH GOVERNMENTAL PAYOR EXPOSURE: Medicare and MediCal accounted for 77.5% of gross revenues in 2015, nearly a 10% increase in just two years due to MediCal expansion. Supplemental funding receipts are also growing, and totaled $8.8 million in 2014 compared to $5.2 million in 2013. A total of $11.3 million is estimated for 2015 as management continues to leverage various available intergovernmental and supplemental funding programs. While supplemental funding dollars are expected to diminish nationally over the next few years, Fitch believes the immediate impact from participating in these programs is distinctly positive for TRMC.

IMPROVING LIQUIDITY: TRMC's cash and investments grew 70% over the last year, supported by stronger profitability and cash flows. Liquidity metrics of 97.3 days cash on hand, 6.1x cushion ratio, and 90.6% cash-to-debt are consistent with the 'BB-' rating.

RATING SENSITIVITIES

RESOLUTION OF LONG-TERM PROJECT FUNDING: Changes in the Tulare Regional Medical Center's rating will likely be driven by the resolution of its long-term funding requirements. Approval of the proposed public funding necessary to complete its tower construction project could lead to positive rating action. The effect of alternative outside funding arrangements would be evaluated, and TRMC's inability to address the uncertainties related to project funding sources over the next 1-2 years could lead to negative rating pressure.

OPERATIONAL STABILITY EXPECTED: In the meantime, Fitch expects TRMC to sustain its operational and financial improvements, and continue generating sufficient cash flows to produce satisfactory debt service coverage ratios. While not expected, reversal of the current positive trend would lead to negative rating pressure.

CREDIT PROFILE

Tulare Local Health Care District, d/b/a Tulare Regional Medical Center owns and operates a 112-bed hospital in the city of Tulare, California. Total operating revenue in FYE June 30, 2015 (unaudited interim results) was $80 million (exclusive of tax revenues related to GO bonds debt service). Since January 2014, TRMC has been managed by HealthCare Conglomerate Associates (HCCA). The current management agreement runs until 2029 with possible extensions.

STABILIZING OPERATIONAL AND FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

Under HCCA's leadership, operating and financial performance improved dramatically over the last 18 months. Since April 2014, TRMC has posted positive monthly operating income. In fiscal 2015, operating income was $8.5 million (10.6% operating margin) compared to a loss of $2.2 million (negative 3.2% operating margin) in 2014 and a loss of $9.9 million in 2012 (negative 13% operating margin). Similarly, operating EBITDA margin recovered to a strong 16.9% in 2015 compared to 4.4% the prior year.

Management attributes the turnaround to the integration of new leaders throughout the organization who have conducted meticulous review of operating efficiencies, supplemental revenue sources, and expense savings. The hospital workforce was completely privatized in November 2014, resulting in a staff reduction of approximately 10% and a resulting structure that allows for better staff management. Additionally, the expansion of MediCal has led to enhanced clinical volumes and a favorable shift in payor mix.

Now that operations have stabilized, management's goal is to leverage all available supplemental funding programs in the state and rebuild/expand its community network. Management is budgeting an operating income of $7 million (8.5% operating margin) for fiscal 2016, which Fitch believes is achievable given sustainable financial improvements put in place and limited competition in the service area.

CONSTRUCTION PLANS PROGRESSING

TRMC has a construction project in progress featuring a 24-bed emergency department, a new diagnostic department, a 16-bed obstetric unit, four surgery suites, and 27 new private patient rooms meeting seismic requirements. This new expansion tower was initially slated to open October 2012, but suffered disruptions due to concrete delamination issues and ensuing conflicts with contractors.

Since HCCA assumed overseeing the project in early 2014, TRMC was able to complete the exterior framing of the building after reaching an agreement with the previous contractors and reviewing/renegotiating other existing contracts. The original general obligation (GO) bond funds were exhausted in fall 2014, and improvements have since then been funded with internal equity.

The hospital district board voted unanimously to have a $55 million public financing measure go to a vote by the residents of the hospital district. The vote is expected to take place early 2016. Fitch views this development favorably, as the public financing measure, if approved, would provide sufficient funding to complete the construction project without affecting TRMC's cash flows. Fitch believes the 'BB-' rating is supported by TRMC's current financial and operating profile without taking into account the impact of additional public funding sources, but also assumes that the tower projects will not require TRMC to fund the project using its internal cash and investments.

IMPROVING LIQUIDITY

Unrestricted cash and investments totaled $18 million at June 30, 2015, up from $10.6 million one year prior. The improvement is primarily attributable to improved operating cash flows and measured capital spending related to the tower project. Liquidity metrics of 97.3 days cash on hand, 6.1x cushion ratio, and 90.6% cash-to-debt are markedly improved from prior years, and are consistent with the 'BB-' rating.

The TRMC board has approved the implementation of Cerner electronic medical record system, which will essentially replace core applications with a single system and is expected to cost around $3.3 million. Capital spending outside of the tower project and IT is expected to be minimal. Also, Fitch recognizes the somewhat less predictable timing of supplemental funding receipts in California, but believes TRMC now has a sufficient cash balance to endure a degree of timing discrepancy.

DEBT PROFILE

At June 30, 2015, Tulare's revenue supported debt burden totaled $19.8 million, consisting of $14.7 million in series 2007 bonds and capital leases. The debt is all fixed rate and produces a maximum annual debt service (MADS) of $2.9 million, which declines to $1.3 million in fiscal 2017 following the final payment on the capital lease. Debt burden is relatively low, as measured by debt-to-capitalization of 25.8% in 2015. Supported by improved cash flows, MADS coverage was a strong 5.3x in fiscal 2015, up from 1.2x in 2013 and 2014.

Not included in Fitch's calculation of TRMC's long-term debt are $85 million existing GO bonds, which are not rated by Fitch. Since TRMC's GO debt is separately secured by a special assessment on property taxes in the district, Fitch's calculation of financial ratios excludes the GO debt and related receipts.

DISCLOSURE

TRMC covenants to disclose annual financial statements within six months of year-end and quarterly unaudited financial statements within 30 days through the MSRB EMMA website.

Fitch notes that TRMC received an unmodified (clean) audit opinion in 2014, following two years of going-concern opinions. Additionally, TRMC is providing monthly financial statements to EMMA for a specified period of time. Current management has emphasized focus on better reporting practices and have provided consistent and timely disclosure since 2014, which is viewed positively.

Additional information is available at 'www.fitchratings.com'.

Tulare Police

Continued from p. 1

dog to possibly avert his colleague from shooting Chizum. When Smith saw that his dog was in danger he handed his cell phone over to the officer in order to try and divert the attention away from Chizum.

The dog was hit in the mouth and bleeding as he ran into the four lanes of traffic on South K Street. A witness, Doug Emery, sitting only 20 feet away, tried to coax the dog out of the traffic and Chizum took refuge in the trailer park across from the shop.

After Smith relinquished his cell phone he was handcuffed with his hands behind his back. At this point, according to Emery, a police sergeant put his knee on Smith's back and started pummeling Smith's head.

"All I know is that they beat the s**t out of that boy and he was already down," said Emery. By the seventh blow Emery yelled at the sergeant, "F**k he's down already, quit socking him." The sergeant continued punching Smith in the head until a police officer who seemed to be in charge told the policeman to stop. At that point the sergeant pulled Smith's handcuffed hands as far up Smith's back as possible and Smith had to take evasive action crawling up the side of his car to prevent both shoulders being dislocated. The sergeant then physically threw Smith into the back of his patrol car.

While Smith was sitting in the back of the patrol car wondering what had just happened, another scenario was unfolding at home just five minutes away. Smith's foster father, Michael Koonce, was informed by their neighbor that they had seen his son being arrested at the auto-shop. Koonce then noticed that Chizum was missing but that the back gate was closed. He put two and two together and realized that Smith had taken Chizum on his errands and that the police must have taken possession of the dog.

Jonathan Smith and his dog Chizum. Catherine Doe/Valley Voice

After a few calls, Koonce found Chizum at Tulare Animal Services. According to Koonce, he went to the shelter to identify the dog but could not take possession himself. He had to wait for a police officer to bring the dog home. Half an hour later the officer arrived with the dog, but before he opened Chizum's metal cage, he informed Koonce that he and Smith should be grateful that the Tulare Police Department did not shoot the dog. He said that they did, however, taser and pepper spray the dog. Koonce was so appalled by Chizum's appearance and condition that he didn't think to get the officers name or badge number.

Meanwhile, in the patrol car, the officers determined that because of Smith's injuries, they had to get him cleared by a doctor before they put him in jail. According to Smith, they took him to Tulare Regional Medical Center, where Smith was cleared in 10 minutes by an ER doctor. From the hospital, Smith was taken to the Bob Wiley Detention Center. The reason for his detention was that he was pulled over for a vehicle code violation, and then arrested for resisting arrest.

It is important to note that Smith is a slight man born with spina bifida and at least 50 pounds lighter than any of the attending police officers.

While in his jail cell, Smith's head throbbed from the beating and he was disorientated. He threw up several times and was ridiculed for missing the toilette. After six hours without improvement he was released. According to Smith's lawyers, John Sarsfield and Maggie Melo, an individual can be held without charges for up to three days. But in cases where medical attention is needed, it is common practice to immediately release the detainee to avoid the cost of medical care, which is what happened in Smith's case. Once released and in the care of his father, they drove straight to the hospital. Koonce, a former nurse, could see that Smith needed immediate medical attention. After an array of tests Smith was diagnosed with swelling of the brain, concussion, impaired vision, fluid on the knee and a bruised back. Smith is currently on crutches because of his injured knee.

His cell phone was not among the belongings returned to him up on his release.

What's Next?

Smith is scheduled to appear at Tulare County Superior Court on September 24. At the hearing the charges could either be dropped or the Tulare County District Attorney could order that Smith be charged with resisting arrest. In any case, Smith's lawyers are hoping to get his cell phone back. Smith commented that the police recorded the incident also.

In the mean time, Sarsfield and Melo plan on filing a complaint for excessive force. They also plan on contacting the FBI. When asked why, Sarsfield said, "Because I'm sick of this crap." He said for a county this small there are way too many cases of police brutality and he blames the District Attorney, Tim Ward. The law Offices of Sarsfield and Melo is currently handling from five to eight police brutality cases throughout Tulare County. Both Sarsfield and Melo said they are former police officers who have defended police in court, so they know both sides of the issue.

Sarsfield says that the Visalia Police Department isn't perfect but they rarely see claims of police brutality coming out of that department. "It's because of good management," Melo said.

This is the second high-profile abuse case concerning the Tulare Police Department to hit the media. The *Visalia Times-Delta* reported on July 23 that a Lindsay woman is pressing charges for being detained for three days because she was talking on her cell phone while driving. The Tulare Police Department believe it was a case of mistaken identity.

In addition to the abuse cases, Tulare's Police Chief, Jerry Breckinridge, was arrested for domestic violence in May and has since been put on administrative leave. Tulare's Deputy City Manager, Margee Fallert, has been on administrative leave since April for undisclosed reasons. Taxpayers are paying $22,500 a month to keep these two high-ranking employees on paid leave.

The lower level of the Valley Voice building is for lease.
For more information, call Shari Aguirre at Zeeb Commercial Real Estate at 559-625-2128.

Address: 3350 S. Fairway, Visalia
Location: Fairway between Caldwell and Sunnyside (behind Joann's Fabrics and Bowling Alley)
Monthly Rate: $2,090.00
Price/Sq Ft: .80

Eagle Mountain Casino Charity Golf Tournament

Eagle Mountain Casino is pleased to announce its 15th Annual Benefit Golf Tournament Thursday, October 15 to be held at Rio Bravo Country Club in Bakersfield.

There will be four sponsorship options of $350, $2,000, $3,500 and $5,000. Registration begins at 8am and Shotgun starts at 10:30am. An awards banquet and a raffle will follow upon the end of the day.

Tournament proceeds will benefit local organizations such as the Tule River Scholarship Fund, Wounded Heroes of Kern County, Porterville Adult Day Services and the Porterville Area Coordinating Council. Throughout the year, donations are distributed to these organizations to further their communal efforts.

For more information on Eagle Mountain Casinos 15th Annual Golf Tournament, contact Salvador Ambriz, (559) 788-6220 x1905 or salvador.ambriz@eaglemtncasino.com.

Eagle Mountain Casino is a full service casino and is owned and operated by the Tule River Tribe. It features 1200 slot machines and 11 table games.

Exeter Residents Could Pay More for Water

Dave Adalian

Residents of Exeter may see a hike in their sewer, water and refuse rates sometime around the end of this year.

The proposed increases are needed to keep the city services funding in the black and to cover maintenance of the sewer and water systems, said Daymon Qualls, director of Public Works for the city. Qualls said the city is just beginning the process of approving rate hikes, and citizens will get their chance to weigh in on the topic before any changes are made.

"We're very early into this process," he said. "For almost a year, city staff and our engineering firm, Quad Knopf, have been looking at our rates to see if they're appropriate."

'Relatively Minor Adjustments'

What they found was the city's funds for these basic services were slowly eroding, meaning customers may have to pay more to keep the toilets flushing and the tap water running. For sewer and water, the rate change should be a "relatively minor adjustment," Qualls said. The same is not true of for refuse collection.

"Our refuse fund has been failing for some time," Qualls said. "It's going to need more attention."

The changes proposed include a 7.5% increase for the cost of water, from $20.65 to $22.20 for basic residential service; a 1.5% increase for sewer service, meaning a change from $20 to $20.30; and a much larger 13.8% increase for refuse removal, from $16.60 to $18.89. The increases, Qualls said, will not exceed the change in the Consumer Price Index, which represents an average rise in overall costs for a typical household in the area. But, all of the rate increases are subject to change before the Council makes its final call.

"All of this is subject to change before the hearing date," Qualls said. "This is just a snapshot of where we're at based on our fee study."

Public Hearings Coming

The city has not increased its rates recently, and before the city council makes a decision the public will get its chance to talk about it at a public hearing scheduled for Tuesday, October 27 at City Hall. Because the city's funds for these services has been historically strong, rate increases have been rare.

"There were a few years our fund was doing really well, and we went to council and chose not to do an increase that year," Qualls said.

Should the council approve the rate changes, users can expect to see their bills go up in early 2016.

"We anticipate by the first of the year," Qualls said of the possible increases. "We may even do it sooner. A lot of that will depend on how quickly we can get it together and what council wants to do."

Maintaining Infrastructure

The city currently services about 3,300 households. There is no low-income program available.

Part of the additional fees will go toward ensuring the city's basic services continue to be available. And, the drought is playing a roll.

"We have a lot of needs around the city with regards to our infrastructure," Qualls said. "One of the things we've got to look closely at is a new well. As far as the sewage, the state now requires sludge beds to be lined."

Sludge beds are used at the city's Waste Treatment Facility to store effluent, and currently there are beds that cannot be used.

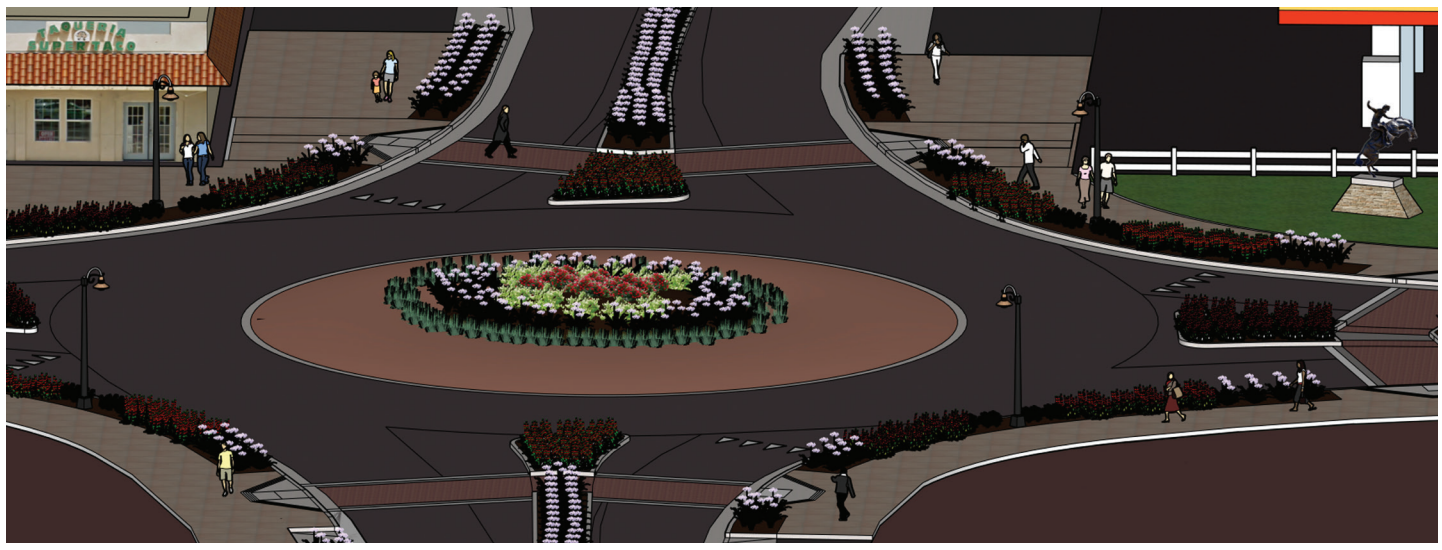
"We're out of room," Qualls said.

Roundabouts

Continued from p. 1

Lara said. "If it wasn't for being able to get CMAQ funding, which is paying for 88%, and Measure R matching funds, the city would never have been able to fund the project."

The intersection will remain open during construction, but drivers should expect delays.



A rendering of the under construction Woodlake roundabout. Rendering courtesy Quad Knopf.

Following the Money

Critics of the roundabouts question why Measure R funds have been used for these projects when many existing roads are in need of repair. The answer may lay in how Measure R funds are shared.

Jason Waters, Woodlake's Community Services director and former employee of the Tulare County Association of Governments, which administers the Measure R funds, said each city receives a portion of Measure R money it may spend as it will, meaning how the cash is ultimately used is up to the many local councils that receive it.

"A portion of the revenue goes to cities to use for local stuff," Waters said. "Measure R funds can be used for maintenance."

That doesn't mean it's always the best way to use them. In the case of the Woodlake and Farmersville projects, Measure R money was used to provide the local portion of the roundabouts' cost so the cities could receive the much more generous federal grants. Of the revenue collected under Measure R, 35% goes to local programs.

Driving For Safety

Drivers can expect a bigger impact to their commute during the construction in Farmersville, where a pair of roundabouts will make navigating the difficult interchanges on Noble Avenue at Farmersville Boulevard and at State Route 198 easier and less dangerous.

"It's under construction as we speak," said Farmersville City Manager John Jansons. "It's being treated as one project, but it's really two."

Here, the emphasis is on safety. Drivers exiting the 198 from the west are faced with entering traffic on Noble, where eastbound vehicles are hidden by a curve in the road that puts them in drivers' blind spots. Exacerbating the situation is the new slew of businesses that have been constructed in the island between Noble and the highway in recent years. Drivers face a similar problem when merging south onto Farmersville Boulevard from Noble, where cross-traffic can come swiftly across the highway overpass to the north. The roundabouts should reduce collisions at both locations.

The cost savings gained by constructing roundabouts instead of switching to traffic signals is significant. The price tag for both roundabouts in the Farmersville project is estimated to be $5 million. A more traditional solution would have demanded closer to $30 million, without the added benefit of reducing pollution from cars as they wait for the lights to change. It should be complete next year, but could have been a much longer time coming.

"It'll be completed sometime in 2016," Jansons said. "The city has been moved up on the list, so to speak. It was a matter of TCAG trying to deliver traffic projects to smaller communities."

Construction there began August 10.

Driving In Circles

When the first roundabouts were proposed for Tulare County, in Visalia and Lindsay, concern was raised that drivers unfamiliar with the European-style exchanges would have trouble navigating them. So far, reality has not borne that out.

In Visalia, a roundabout at the point where Houston Avenue, Santa Fe Street and two other roads converge has eased traffic backup there, and drivers seem to have no more difficulty making their way through than their overseas counterparts do. Fender-benders are no longer a common sight there.

The roundabout at Elmwood Avenue and Hermosa Street in Lindsay has become a central feature of that city's downtown, contributing to its revitalization. There, the design allowed easy access to businesses in a busy but narrow intersection, while keeping the area pedestrian-friendly.

Clearing the Air

Statistics back up the notion the unusual intersections improve safety for everyone on the roads. According to the Federal Highway Administration, traffic collisions are 76% less likely at roundabouts, while fatalities are reduced by a whopping 90%. Pedestrians are 40% less likely to be hit while crossing at a roundabout, and vehicles that pass through them spend 18 seconds less crossing than they do at traditionally controlled intersections.

That 18-second reduction may sound small, but when that factor is multiplied by the number of vehicles using the roundabouts the impact grows significantly. According to the California Environmental Protection Agency, mobile sources of air pollution -- mainly trucks, cars and buses -- accounted for 29.7% of pollutants in the San Joaquin Valley Unified Air Pollution Control District.

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"Every Kid in a Park Pass": Fourth Graders, Their Families Eligible for Free Access to Federal Lands and Waters

As part of President Obama's commitment to protect our nation's unique outdoor spaces and ensure that every American has the opportunity to visit and enjoy them, the Obama Administration has launched the new Every Kid in a Park program.

Fourth graders nationwide can visit the new Every Kid in a Park website to obtain a pass that provides free access to students and their families to all federally managed lands and waters – including national parks, forests, wildlife refuges and marine sanctuaries. The pass is valid for the 2015-2016 school year and grants free entry for fourth graders and three accompanying adults (or an entire car for drive-in parks) at more than 2,000 federally-managed sites.

"Every Kid in a Park is a chance for fourth graders from every background to be outside and get to know the lands and waters that belong to them, whether it's a national forest, a wildlife refuge, a marine sanctuary or a historic site in the center of a city," said Christy Goldfuss, Managing Director at the White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ). "By expanding their horizons and learning all the ways the outdoors can enrich their lives, this innovative program hopes to create greater awareness of the many benefits of our nation's public lands and waters."

Leading up to the 100th birthday of the National Park Service in 2016, President Obama announced the Every Kid in a Park initiative earlier this year as a call to action to get all children to experience America's unparalleled outdoors, rich history and culture. Today, more than 80 percent of American families live in urban areas, and many lack easy access to safe outdoor spaces. At the same time, youth spend more hours than ever in front of screens instead of outside.

By introducing fourth graders to public lands in their backyards and beyond at an early age, Every Kid in a Park is part of a multi-pronged approach to inspire the next generation to discover all that our nation's public lands and waters have to offer, including opportunities to be active, spend time with friends and family, and serve as living classrooms to build critical skills.

"America is blessed with the great outdoors, and through Every Kid in a Park, we're inviting every fourth grader and their families to enjoy our nation's unrivaled public lands and waters," said Secretary Jewell. "We want to make sure that every American has the opportunity to develop a lifelong connection to our nation's land, water and wildlife."

"The National Park Service is inviting every kid in America to find their park as we celebrate our 100th birthday in 2016. When fourth graders and their families use their free passes, they will discover fun-filled adventures in the outdoors and learn about themselves and our collective history," said Jonathan B. Jarvis, Director of the National Park Service

Fourth graders can log onto the website at www.everykidinapark.gov and complete a fun educational activity in order to obtain and print their paper pass. Students may also trade in their paper pass for a more durable pass at participating federal sites nationwide.

Educators and community leaders can access educational activities, field trip options, and the ability to print passes for their classrooms. Parents visiting the new website can find additional links for more information on planning trips to nearby public lands.

As an integral component of this effort, the National Park Foundation (NPF) – the congressionally chartered foundation of the National Park Service – will award Every Kid in a Park transportation grants, focusing on removing barriers for youth from underserved communities to get to their parks, public lands and waters.

The Every Kid in a Park program is designed to continue each year with the then-current group of fourth graders. After twelve years, every school-age child in America will have had an opportunity to visit their public land and waters for free, inspiring the next generation to be stewards of our nation's shared natural and cultural heritage.

The Every Kid in a Park program is an Administration-wide effort administered in partnership with the Department of the Interior, the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Education, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

For more information, visit www.everykidinapark.gov.

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Office 6,168±sf Visalia $400,000
Retail 12,310±sf Tulare $175,000
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Land 2.17± acres Visalia $1,050,000
Land Retail 4.18± acres Tulare $1,000,000
Land Ind Lots 21.20± acres Tulare - $ Varies
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Land Ind 15.3± acres Shafter $1,995,000
Land Ind 153± acres Visalia $65,000/ac.

Ask for **Mike Porte,**
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10 Reasons Governor Brown Must Ban Fracking in California

The Science is in: A recent independent study by the California Council on Science and Technology (CCST) reveals the dangers of fracking and extreme oil extraction in the Golden State.

1. Fracking threatens our groundwater

About three quarters of fracking in California takes place in shallow wells less than 2000 ft. deep. This increases the risk of water contamination because fracking can create direct conduits for pollutants to reach groundwater used for drinking and irrigation. Toxic wastewater from fracking and production is also disposed of by illegally injecting it directly into our protected drinking water aquifers. In addition, wastewater is commonly disposed of in unlined pits, a practice that has been banned in other states. There is ample evidence that these unlined pits have contaminated groundwater.

2. Wastewater from oil fields where fracking has occurred is used to irrigate crops.

Wastewater from oil production in Kern River and Mount Poso - where fracking has occurred - is being used for crop irrigation. It is likely that fracking fluids are in the water being used for irrigation. Prior to use, wastewater undergoes treatment that is insufficient to remove dangerous chemicals, and it is not tested for fracking chemicals.

3. Oil extraction in California has an ugly track record of leaks and spills

Between 2011 and 2014, oil companies reported 575 wastewater spills in California. 18% of those spills affected waterways. Offshore oil production has not fared much better; from 2009 to 2014, there were 170 spill incidents offshore.

4. In a time of record drought, fracking uses a lot of water

Fracking and fracking-enabled extreme oil extraction use over 4 billion gallons of water annually in California.

5. Fracking is likely to cause earthquakes in California

The risk of fracking wastewater injection triggering significant earthquakes may be as great or greater than in other parts of the country. California's wastewater disposal wells are closer to the surface and closer to active faults. The study also found a likely link between injection well activity and a cluster of earthquakes in the Santa Maria basin.

6. Fracking threatens endangered wildlife

These threats include: habitat loss, spread of invasive species, contamination of aquatic environments, noise and light pollution, and vehicle traffic. The San Joaquin Valley - where the majority of fracking in California occurs - is home to 143 federally listed species, candidates and species of concern. Fracking activity also overlaps with critical habitat for the California condor and steelhead salmon.

7. Around half a million people in California live within one mile of a well that has been fracked or otherwise stimulated

The closer residents live to fracking wells, the more elevated their exposure risk to toxic air contaminants. Studies show the most significant public health risks - including adverse birth outcomes and increased cancer risk - occur within half a mile from active oil and gas development. In the Los Angeles basin alone, there are 20 schools, 39 daycare centers, 27 elderly homes, and 128,000 people within a half mile of a fracked or otherwise stimulated well. In Los Angeles in particular, oil and gas development clearly occur in low-income communities and communities of color.

8. Fracking uses a cocktail of highly toxic chemicals

14 chemicals used in hydraulic fracturing are among the most toxic compounds as ranked by the United Nations. Little is known about many other chemicals used in fracking. In fact, two thirds of chemicals used in fracking and extreme extraction have incomplete or no information on their toxicity.

9. The EPA allows offshore fracking wells to dump toxic wastewater directly into the Pacific Ocean

In federal waters, operators are allowed to discharge fracking wastewater directly into the ocean, despite the fact that there are no studies on the effects of fracking discharge on marine environments. Lab tests suggest harm to marine life can result from exposure to wastewater discharge. Lack of data on the toxicity of 31 of the 48 chemicals used in offshore fracking is also a significant problem.

10. What we don't know about fracking in California is frightening

Oil companies are profiting off of a massive science experiment in which our health, air, water, and environment are the guinea pigs. The CCST report concludes that the sheer number and toxicity of chemicals used in fracking and extreme extraction fluids make it impossible to quantify the risks to the environment and human health.

Created by the Center for Biological Diversity for Californians Against Fracking

Briefly...

PROVOST & PRITCHARD CONSULTING GROUP RANKED SEVENTH IN NATION AS 2015 'BEST CIVIL ENGINEERING FIRM TO WORK FOR'

Civil Engineering News (CE News) recently ranked Provost & Pritchard Consulting Group seventh among the "Best Civil Engineering Firms to Work For" nationwide in 2015. Provost & Pritchard has been selected for the "Best Firms" list each of the 13 years they have participated in the award competition.

According to CE News, the "Best Firms to Work For" award recognizes the top firms leading the way in creating a work place that inspires, motivates, and rewards employees. Firms who applied for this prestigious ranking were evaluated comprehensively on workplace practices, employee benefits, employee retention rates, professional development, and more – both from the management and staff's perspectives.

"Our company is built on the principle that people who enjoy their work are happier, more productive and more satisfied employees. We strive to stay true to that principle so that we can continue to recruit and retain the best professionals, who will in turn provide the highest level of service to our valued clients. Being recognized by CE News as a 'Best Place to Work' is an honor," shared Ronald Samuelian, Provost & Pritchard's president.

Provost & Pritchard's final ranking was determined largely by the results of a confidential Employee Satisfaction Survey of full-time staff. Questions were based on a variety of topics including culture, management style, benefits, staff recognition, compensation, professional development, recruiting, and retention.

THREE RIVERS COLLABORATES WITH NATIONAL PARKS SERVICE TO CELEBRATE DARK SKIES MONTH

1st Saturday in Three Rivers is collaborating with the National Parks Service to celebrate DARK SKIES month, starting on Friday, September 4th, 11am-8:30pm.

Maps may be picked up at Anne Lang's Emporium, 41651 Sierra Dr., or the Three Rivers Historical Museum, 42268 Sierra Dr., to find the locations of fine artists, crafts persons and musicians.

Anne Lang's Emporium displays fine artists, so visitors should look, around. Ceramic sculptures by Marn Reich, Clancy Barlow's and Jana Botkin's paintings may all be found here. HJ & Anne Brown have made some unique vases to go with the glorious flowers at Anne Lang's.

Singer-songwriter Brandon Pasion tells a collective story, to highlight the many subtle ways in which all of us are different, and unites us by a good song and a moment shared. Hear Brandon at Spirit Hill Meditation Garden and Art Studio at 1pm. Jeri Burzin, photographer, will also be at Spirit Hill.

Along with artists and craftspersons at the Art Center, visitors can hear members from the Visalia Music School. Listen to the sounds of pop, rock and blues at 3pm.

Sequoia Natural History Association presents Aadil and Farheen Rizvi, brother and sister, scientists from the NASA's Jet Propulsion Lab in Pasadena. Aadil Rizvi is a software systems engineer and is currently part of the Europa avionics team working very closely with command and data handling hardware and software that will be used on board the spacecraft to travel from Earth to Jupiter's orbit in order to explore its icy moon Europa.

Farheen Rizvi is an aerospace engineer and has contributed to the spacecraft pointing control work for the deep space spacecraft, Cassini – a mission to explore the second largest planet of our solar system, Saturn, its rings and moons, and earth orbiting spacecraft, SMAP – whose soil moisture data scientists use for improving flood, drought and weather forecast predictions.

Their father was a successful atmospheric scientist in India, and later chose to emigrate to the US in order to provide better education for his children. Both siblings hold bachelor and master degrees from University of Colorado, Boulder.

In recognition of his contributions to Curiosity rover's flight software, Aadil Rizvi received a Space Act Award from NASA along with the NASA software of the year 2013 award presented to the entire MSL flight software team.

"To be a part of an art event is exciting," says Farheen Rizvi. "You cannot work in space without an awareness of art."

Find details of the participants in 1st Saturday on the blog at www.1stsaturdayTR.com.

Artists may call (559) 561-3463, to join 1st Saturday in Three Rivers. The deadline for participation is the 15th of every month and it costs only $10 a month. — *Shirley Keller*

RECURRENT ENERGY JOINS SPONSORS OF WHCCD'S ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS SERIES

Recurrent Energy—an international solar project developer with headquarters in the United States and Canada—has joined the list of sponsors for Shifting Ground: Adapting the San Joaquin Valley Economy to a Changing Climate, part of the West Hills Community College District's Essential Elements series.

The Thursday, Oct. 8 event is the fourth in a series of policy events presented by WHCCD, which aims to organize hands-on partnerships, encourage planning for the future of the San Joaquin Valley, and focus attention on issues around water, logistics, trade and energy. The series was offered for the first time last year and brings together public policy and private sector leaders to confront crises and challenges in the Valley.

"Essential Elements is a day-long convening to find and take action steps for the San Joaquin Valley's economic operating system," said Dr. Stuart Van Horn, Vice Chancellor of Educational Services and Workforce Development. "A primary objective is creating next generation jobs in a region devastated by the drought and confronting a volatile future. The results we create will be used to calibrate community college Career Technical Education throughout the Valley."

Recurrent Energy joins several other sponsors including Chevron, The Gualco Group, WHCCD/Colleges/Foundation, The Wonderful Company, Harris Woolf, Westside Institute of Technology, Central Valley Power Connect, PG&E, Central Mother Lode Region Consortium, Jobs and the Economy, California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley, Office of Community and Economic Development, and California State University, Fresno.

"The district is delighted to welcome Recurrent Energy to our stable of partners for Essential Elements," Van Horn said. "Their support is helping us reiterate a sense of urgency and frame issues in a way that presents opportunities for us to work collaboratively to confront the crises and challenges facing the valley."

The event will be held at Harris Ranch Inn and Conference Center in Coalinga and will feature several speakers from a variety of industries. For more information and to register for the event, visit essentialelementsseries.com.

Viewpoint

City of Tulare Announces Local Efforts to Recognize September as School Attendance Awareness Month

The City of Tulare's Mayor David Macedo, Tulare City School District's Superintendent, Dr. Clare Gist, Tulare Joint Union High School District's Superintendent, Dr. Sarah Koligian and the Tulare Interim Chief of Police, Wes Hensley, have joined a nationwide effort to celebrate School Attendance Awareness Month in September and have pledged to raise awareness about the value of regular school attendance and focus on reducing chronic absenteeism in the new school year.

Tulare City (Elementary) School District and Tulare Joint Union High School District recognize that good attendance is essential to academic success.

But far too many students are at risk academically because they are chronically absent. (Chronic absence is described as missing 10 percent of the school year—or about 18 days – for any reason, excused or unexcused.)

That's the point at which absenteeism begins to seriously affect student performance, research shows.

Starting as early as preschool, chronic absence predicts lower 3rd grade reading scores and students who do not read proficiently by the 3rd grade are four times more likely to become high school drop-outs.

Chronic absence touches a significant number of children in our community, creating attendance gaps that affect achievement in our local schools.

This is not just a matter of truancy. Several children, especially in the early grades, miss too much school because of chronic health problems, or housing moves—barriers that city agencies and community partners can help families address.

"This issue matters to all of us, not just those with school-age children," Mayor Macedo said. "When our schools graduate more students, on time, our communities and our economy are stronger. We have more people who are prepared for the workplace and more engaged in our community's civic life."

Tulare City School District Superintendent, Dr. Clare Gist states, "It is of great importance that we educate our school community about the correlation between good attendance and success in school, and that means starting as early as preschool."

Tulare Joint Union High School District Superintendent, Dr. Sarah Koligian says "Our schools, parents, and community need to work together to ensure that our students are attending school every day to maximize access to a quality education and to ensure they cross the finish line and graduate."

In September, schools, city agencies, community nonprofits, faith-based groups, businesses and others around the nation are committing time and resources to raise public awareness, map local attendance gaps and work with community partners to improve school attendance starting as soon as children enter school.

"September is a particularly good time to focus on attendance," said Hedy Chang, Director of Attendance Works, a national nonprofit dedicated to improve school attendance, "Research shows that students who miss two to four days in the first month of school are more likely to become chronically absent during the school year. By paying attention to absences early in the school year and early in a child's academic career, we can turn around attendance and achievement."

"Truancy and poor school attendance has been clearly identified as an early warning sign for potential substance abuse, delinquency, teen pregnancy, and criminal activity," says Interim Chief of Police Wes Hensley

During Attendance Awareness Month, we are asking school leaders, community advocates, parents and students to act upon these critical first steps to help stem chronic absenteeism:

- Encourage the building of a community culture that promotes regular school attendance.
- Use data to determine when and with whom chronic absence is a problem
- Identify and address barriers to getting children to school
- Join local school districts in addressing the barriers to getting children and youth to school

Study after study shows that chronic absence is an early warning indicator that a student will drop out of a high school.

High school drop-outs are ineligible for 90% of the jobs in our nation. The U.S., which had some of the highest graduation rates of any developed country, now ranks 22nd out of 27 developed countries.

— Mayor David Macedo; Tulare City School District Superintendent, Dr. Clare Gist; Tulare Joint Union High School Superintendent, Dr. Sarah Koligian; Tulare City School District Board of Trustees; Tulare Joint Union High School Board of Trustees; and Tulare Interim Chief of Police

Suicide Prevention is a Community Goal

Darcy Massey
and Brenda Johnson-Hill
Co-chairwomen, Tulare-Kings
Suicide Prevention Task Force

Suicide is a tragic fact of life in Tulare and Kings counties, as in the entire nation:

- In Tulare County, 41 people have committed suicide so far this year, which is as many as all of last year and close to the county's annual average.
- In Kings County, 10 people have taken their own lives this year as of the end of June. Last year, Kings County had a total of 11 suicides, about the annual average.
- In the United States, one person completes suicide every 13 minutes.
- It has been estimated that more than 5 million people in the United States have been directly affected by a suicide.
- 50 percent of all persons who die by suicide use a firearm, kept in the home allegedly for safety, to kill themselves.

Any incident of suicide is tragic and alarming, just as every life is precious. We want people in Tulare and Kings counties to know that our area has an effective organization for addressing suicide prevention, one of the most innovative in the nation.

The Tulare & Kings Counties Suicide Prevention Task Force asks the public to join us in observing Suicide Prevention Week, Sept. 7-13.

We are asking that people raise their awareness, reach out to those at risk and become involved in the programs offered in by our two-county collaborative.

The SPTF was formed with funding from voter-approved Proposition 63, The Mental Health Services Act of 2008. Since being officially constituted in 2009, the SPTF has:

- Sponsored the Festival of Hope, attended by more than 13,000 people from 2010 to 2014.
- Performed outreach at more than 130 community events in two counties.
- Co-sponsored the Slick Rock Film Festival since 2011.
- Distributed more than 170,000 copies of its publications.
- Provided training to more than 14,000 people.

The SPTF pursues its mission with outreach to schools and community, publication and materials, training, special events and programs, including:

- LOSS (Local Outreach to Survivors of Suicide) Team, which supports the mental health of those who experience loss in order to prevent their becoming victims.
- Training for members of the public, include ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills), which teaches individuals how to recognize risk factors in people they know; and Mental Health First Aid, which teaches about mental illness and reduces stigma.
- Connections with local suicide survivor support groups.
- Grief and Bereavement Support Group and Voucher program, which offers resources to those affected by suicide, including free counseling through the voucher program.
- DRAW (Depression Reduction Achieving Wellness), which is directed at teenagers to reduce a key suicide risk factor – depression.
- Check-In with You: The Older Adult Hopelessness Screening (OAHS) Program, which screens those 55 and older for hopelessness, a major suicide risk and connects them with services.
- Reduction and Elimination of Stigma Through Art-Targeted Education (RESTATE), which has educated more than 1,200 high school students about suicide risk factors through art.
- The Trevor Project, which offers support and hope to young people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender or questioning, another risk factor in teenagers for suicide.

One of our greatest needs, and a strategic planning goal for the next year, is to expand our LOSS Team.

LOSS stands for "Local Outreach to Survivors of Suicide." Survivors are the family and friends left behind who can be deeply affected by a loved one's suicide.

In fact, research shows that persons who are close to someone who has committed suicide then become a higher suicide risk themselves.

Our LOSS Teams have been functioning for more than two years. A LOSS Team is usually two individuals (a survivor and a mental health professional) who are contacted through the Task Force by the Sheriff-Coroner's offices in either Kings or Tulare County. That LOSS Team responds immediately to the scene to meet with family members and friends who have just experienced a loss to suicide.

The goal of the LOSS Team is to provide resources to those left affected by suicide. We want people to know there is help available, and where to find it. There are resources for counseling services, books that may help, and a checklist of items to attend to, but mostly there is the ability to lock eyes with someone who is in the same group that you never asked to belong to, but now do. In making that connection, there is a knowledge that they are not alone and that maybe someday, you too can help someone who is newly bereaved. The most effective LOSS team members are the survivors of suicide.

The number of LOSS team members has grown thin, and the demand for this service has become great. We are anxiously seeking others who would can volunteer to do this important work. We offer training to team members on a periodic basis, but we need more LOSS Team members.

If you are interested in joining our LOSS Team – especially if you are a survivor – please join us. You can send an email to sptf@tularehhsa.org.

Please visit our website, www.sptf.org., to learn more ways you get involved in helping prevent suicide in our community, because every life is too precious to lose.

Darcy Massey, LCSW with Tulare County Health and Human Services Agency. Brenda Johnson-Hill, LMFT, is executive director of Kings View in Kings County. They are co-chairwomen of the Tulare Kings Counties Suicide Prevention Task Force. The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is 1-800-273-TALK (8255): http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/.

Columns & Letters

"I reject your premise that our officers are "Agents of Mean" because they are enforcing the laws they are sworn to uphold. An officer is not going to get a subject to be compliant with a "pretty please, will you please vacate the property?" request. It must be an order given authoritatively. The officer is there because a citizen has called the department, not just because he wants to use his badge to to throw his weight around. The citizens who call do "give a damn" about the City, the law, public health, and image. Tolerance is good, to a point. Unabated, it leads to situations as in found in places like San Francisco where, as you name them, "Rent Free Campers" urinate and defecate on the public streets and sidewalks, turning a once beautiful city into a large Andy Gump.

Your solution is for the local government to provide a designated location, with a few limitations, where "we" can deal with them. Open 8P.M. and evacuated by 6 A.M….no food, NO PERMANENT STRUCTURES, and everything set up and taken down every night, TOILETS!……of course, you will need to find the volunteers willing to provide the manpower (yes, I used MANpower,deal with it), man hours, day in, day out. Even IF you do, and get the city to provide the grounds, shelters, the security, the liability insurance, and any other needrd cost provided assistance, your plan falls apart by your very own argument; that is "They do not follow any rules but their own". When the rules are not followed, then, these "Rent Free Campers" must be again dealt with by law enforcement. Without the officers doing their jobs, we have anarchy.

Gordon Morton
Visalia, Ca."

— ***Gordon Morton,*** *on* ***Make Officers Agents of Care, Not Mean***

"What can you find out about the Tulare Police chief, and the Deputy city manager being on administrative leave at fill pay, ripping off the city at the rate of over 22.000 a month, maybe it's the city mgr that should be fired. What a stupid manager and council for letting this kind of money go"

— ***Ken Vaughn***

"The Heritage of the Central Valley, is Agriculture. My husband and I left Los Angeles in 07, to pursue a more green way of life and create an independent and sustainable homestead environment. San Francisco, as well as San Diego, along with many areas in Los Angeles; enjoy successful urban farming communities. We own our property and pay taxes!

Personally, I have experienced goats to be cleaner and smarter than dogs. They don't bark and are not noisy. I love the smell of my goats; I do not like the smell of dogs. They also provide endless entertainment, and share their love with us everyday. They can be easily managed like dogs, which makes their care, relatively easy(their poop is re-usable, dogs poop is not).

Our neighbors have chickens on all sides and they do not bother us in the slightest. We do not experience predators; we do not see any sickness or disease. Considering the ancestral roots of Visalia/Woodlake/Exeter, the issue of chickens and mini goats should not only NOT be an issue, but considering the issues facing our society, ANYONE who is in line with food independence and sustainability should be considered a "leader"! Let Visalia stand as a positive example of urban farming, resourcefulness and a sustainable future for ALL of it's community members!

Let's take a vote: Do you like Old Visalia or New Visalia??? Main Street or Strip Mall? Family owned or Corporate owned? The cities are failing…does Visalia want to fail?

Draw people here for the Sustainable Community; for a Sustainable Future!"

— ***Wendi Morrison-Merritt,*** *on* ***I'm "No Goat"***

"Of course, the exact "hostage" argument could be made about the council, i.e., "they are holding the pro-goaters and the city voters hostage by refusing to implement the clear will of the majority." I am not particularly sympathetic to the expense argument. Representative democracy and elections costs money occasionally.

Also CCRs and Municipal Codes have routinely be changed and/or struck down by the Courts or other process. They are not timeless promises made to residents. They are at best temporary restrictions on the use of property-restrictions that can always be changed according to the social values of the day. They are not inviolate."

— ***John Sarsfield,*** *on* ***I'm "No Goat"***

"I hate to call anyone a liar, but I find this story of blue collar workers yelling "Redskin" toward this writer hard to believe. Hard to believe this happened for any reason, whether it be football or as a racial slur. The only way I would believe this really happened is if Macareno was actually wearing a full headdress of feathers and carrying a tomahawk at the time."

— ***kelly benevedes,*** *on* ***What's In A Name?***

Veteran's Corner

Retired Military Appreciation Day at NAS Lemoore

Joe Wright

Earlier this year, Governor Brown signed legislation that will require the California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to offer special driver's licenses to veterans. The license will have a "veteran" marking indicating service in the United States Armed Forces. This new program is set to go into effect on Veterans Day, Nov. 11.

In order to receive your veteran driver's license, you'll need to visit your local County Veterans Service Office (CVSO) and complete the DMV application. You'll need a certified copy of your discharge papers (DD-214) showing you received an other than dishonorable discharge, or that you served in a Guard or Reserve component and were mobilized for federal active duty. The CSVO will verify the documents presented and approve/stamp the application. You can then take it to the DMV.

If you don't have a copy of your discharge papers, the CVSO can order a copy. You'll also have an opportunity to discuss the many federal, state and local benefits for which you may be eligible. The CVSO can also file an application for any benefits for you or your family.

Applications for the new veteran driver's license will be available in the CVSO office around Nov. 1. This new driver's license will mean that veterans will no longer need to carry their discharge papers to show proof of military service.

The Kings County Veterans Service Office issues Veteran I.D. cards to honorably discharged veterans. Contact Joe Wright if you would like to receive periodic veteran's information by email. There are many state and federal benefits and programs available to veterans and their dependents. To find out if you are eligible for any of these benefits, visit or call our office. We can and will assist you in completing all required application forms. You can get information on the Web from the Kings County Veterans Service Office webpage at www.countyofkings.com.

Joe Wright, retired Navy Master Chief Petty Officer, is the Veterans Service Officer for Kings County. Send your questions to the Veterans Service Office, 1400 W. Lacey Blvd, Hanford, CA 93230; call 852-2669; or e-mail joe.wright@co.kings.ca.us.

Send us your Letters to the Editor
3350 S. Fairway Street, Visalia, CA 932777
By email: editor@ourvalleyvoice.com

Re: Political Fix (20 August, 2015)

Stephen Crigler

I was most disappointed in Mr. Kasich's connecting his godliness with the wide use of taxpayers money. Obviously you identify with government work being church work. Doesn't charity work need to be voluntary to be charity ? I heard that a Baptist group in Texas took in 12,000 young people that swarmed the border and they have been paid $86K per child by our government. Being a relatively new Baptist I've been wrestling with my Libertarianism. On the one hand I want to thank my liberal athiest colleages for helping spread the gospel or bemoan my church for supporting socialism. Just what are your principles of governance?

Catherine Doe's response:

Concerning Kasich, I was just glad that one of the Republican nominees for president takes into consideration that you might be held accountable for what you do here on Earth. I can't say if he is doing the right or wrong thing. I'm just glad he thinks about it.

That's a struggle to reconcile religion and Libertarianism. Christians don't believe in abortion or assisted end of life, but a true libertarian would not want the government involved in such private matters. I say keep the government out and let God deal with it.

The Political Fix column is not reporting in the strictest sense. It is supposed to encourage debate.

Catherine

North Visalia Pace of Revitalization

Bill Huott

Not sure if city staff realizes what a tremendous amount of individual initiative clean ups and revitalization is occurring all over north Visalia.

Everywhere I look new or fixing up is going on!

I maintained "Clean is less Mean" is the key component to all civic endeavors, whether crime, youth, in fill, appearance, vibe, etc.

City can never spearhead an areas rebirth, city staff taught me this hard and important lesson and they are correct.

It has got to be citizen generated and motivated, but with undying city support; crime, blight, tagging, disorder, and even crime issues like gangs have no hope, no succor from this concentrated focus.

Clean destroys the fertility for negative behaviors.

It is miracle after miracle.

Thank you for all the support!

Everyone of the dedicated city staff is appreciated.

Bill

Print replica edition at issuu.com/ourvalleyvoice

Artist Colleen Veyna completed the enormous mural of the Solar System this summer, working from a NASA composite image. Photo courtesy TCOE.

Planetarium & Science Center Prepares for Fall Grand Opening

Tulare County Office of Education

This summer, acclaimed Tulare County muralist Colleen Veyna painted a 22-foot mural of the Solar System on the front of the new Planetarium & Science Center. The mural, which faces South Mooney Boulevard, will welcome visitors to the new center when it opens later this fall. Ms. Veyna recreated the Solar System's eight planets, Earth's moon, the Sun, and a comet and asteroids on the dark blue wall, working from a composite image created for NASA by artist Harman Smith. "Colleen did a spectacular job," said Tulare County Superintendent of Schools Jim Vidak. "Parents tell us that their children have seen the mural and can't wait to visit 'the building with the planets.'"

Inside the colorful building, Supervisor Conan Palmer and his staff are working to ready the planetarium projector and sound systems and install the display units and merchandise in the gift shop. In the Science Center, a new projection system will be installed to show a few of the popular shows from the old Impact Center History Theater, including What is America? and The First Americans. "In the future, the Science Center will be home to interactive electronic exhibits that students can use to collaboratively solve problems that address the content standards," said Mr. Palmer. "We also look forward to a time when we can bring in special exhibits on a temporary basis from NASA and The Smithsonian Institution."

"We are looking forward to announcing a grand opening date very soon to show off all the special features of the Planetarium & Science Center," said Mr. Vidak. Announcements on the grand opening date and activities will soon be available at tcoe.org/Planetarium.

Village Gardens Says "Enough" to Water Trucks

Catherine Doe

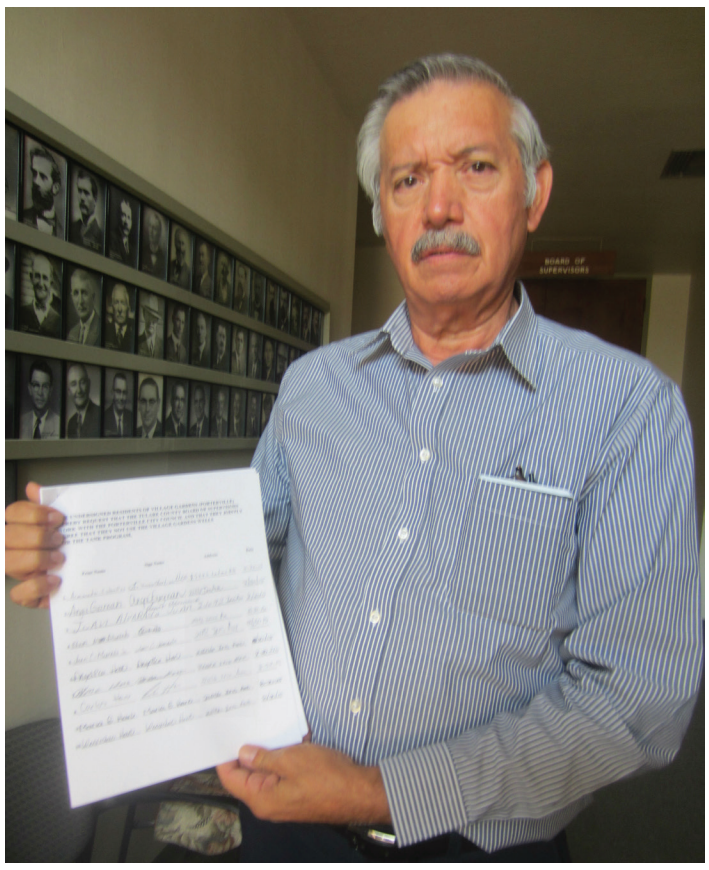
A petition signed by 188 residents and six businesses was submitted by Village Gardens' resident Jack Flores at the September 1, Tulare County Board of Supervisors meeting.

The petition states, "The undersigned residents of Village Gardens (Porterville) hereby request that the Tulare County Board of Supervisors work with the Porterville City Council and that they jointly agree that they not use the Village Gardens' wells for the tank program."

Tulare County has been using the Village Gardens' well, among other wells, to fill up their water tanks. The water is used to fill temporary tanks in areas where domestic wells have gone dry.

The residents of Village Gardens work and cannot come to a 9am meeting in Visalia, Flores said. Many of them have attended several Porterville City Council meetings, but Porterville has no say in this matter. The residents opted for what they say is the next best thing signing the submitted petitions to have their voice be heard by the supervisors.

Flores stated that just west of Village Gardens on Road 176, a 200-foot deep well just started spitting out sand. Village Gardens' wells are at a depth of 240 feet and the residents fear theirs may be next. Flores also points out the danger of the residents' children sharing the same country roads as the tankers in the morning and in the afternoons.



Jack Flores holding a petition signed by 188 residents and six businesses requesting that pumping from Village Gardens' wells end. Catherine Doe/Valley Voice

Valley Voice
Valley Scene
3 September, 2015

Symphony Opens Season With Two Pops in the Park Concerts

Donna Orosco

The Tulare County Symphony always kicks off its season with a fun Pops in the Park concert, but this year you have a choice between a concert at Oval Park in Visalia on Friday, September 11 and one at Zumwalt Park in Tulare on Saturday, September 12.

Rosalinda Verde

The extra Visalia concert came about because Ryan Stillwater of the Visalia Rescue Mission got a Visalia City Arts Grant to help underwrite it.

"This may seem like an unlikely choice for some, but it will provide exposure to many kids around the park who would otherwise not experience this sort of event," Stillwater said. "Who knows, the next Bruce Kiesling could be a third grader from the neighborhood."

Steven Braswell

All tickets sold at the gate at Oval Park will benefit the Visalia Rescue Mission.

At both concerts, the orchestra will play Americana music and marches, movie music, as well as give a sneak peek at the upcoming season. Vocalists Rosalinda Verde, a favorite at the Pops, and Steven Braswell will perform. Braswell portrayed Jesus in this summer's League of Christian Actors' production of "Godspell."

The gates will open at 5pm so the audience can bring a picnic and enjoy the last days of summer before the concert at 8pm. Children can try out playing instruments at the instrument "petting zoo," and they will also be invited by Music Director Bruce Kiesling to have a few minutes on the podium directing the orchestra.

In Tulare there will be food vendors, as well as face painting for children. In Visalia, the audience is invited to buy food items from restaurants located around the Oval.

Those attending the concerts will have the first chance to see the beautiful new symphony program and to buy symphony t-shirts in the season's theme "Rock Stars."

Tickets are $20 for adults and free for youth 12 and under with a paid adult.

In Tulare, you can reserve an up-front table for $250.

Call the symphony at 732-8600 or visit www.tularecountysymphony.org.

The "Big Splash" ride will return this year. For more information, see page 24.

Tulare County Fair Offering Up Favorites

Stefan Barros

The 2015 Tulare County Fair is right around the corner. Opening day is Wednesday, September 16 and the fair will run through Sunday, September 20. This year's fair has some new features while keeping some of the old favorites.

Tulare County Fair Director Pamela Fyock shared some of the new items planned for the fair this year, as well as some returning favorites.

"We will be having monster trucks for the first time in a while on Friday the 18th. There will also be a new watering hole," she said. "Some of the favorites returning include Buttercup the cow, and the tractor pulls will be back on the Thursday night. For the first time, we'll be having the destruction derby on the Saturday. They're both free with fair admission."

This year's headline performers include comedian Paul Rodriguez on Wednesday, Kellie Pickler on Thursday, Foghat on Friday, Rose Royce on Saturday and Marty Stuart on Sunday. All performances are at 8pm and are included with fair admission.

Other entertainment includes the Great American Duck Races; A Walk on the Wild Side, an exotic non-kill animal refuge; Puppets and Players Little Theatre; Jest in Time Circus Family Fun Time; Something Ridiculous; the Great American Petting Zoo; Wild Science; and the Chinese Acrobats of Hebei. There will also be tribute performances by Fortunate Son to Creedance Clearwater Revival and by Fandango to ZZ top.

"Our theme this year is to have something for everyone at the fair," Fyock said.

Fair hours are Wednesday from 11am-11pm, Thursday and Sunday from 11am-12am, and Friday and Saturday from 11am-1am.

Ticket prices to the fair remain unchanged from last year's prices and are: $8 for general admission; $5 for ages 6-12. On Friday, September 18 ticket prices will be $4 before 4 pm. There will be a Senior Day on Thursday, Sept. 17. Tickets for seniors will be $2 from 11am-2pm. Also Military appreciation will be on the Thursday. Tickets for members of the military will be $6 from 11am-2pm.

A new addition to the fair will also be making its way back on Saturday, September 12 at 8 pm. It is the second annual California Cowboys Pro Rodeo Association fair kickoff rodeo. The professional rodeo tour tickets are $10 and $13 at the gate. It serves as a fundraiser for the Tulare County Fair Foundation.

Fyock has high expectations for this fair, and the projected weather forecast is one of the reasons why.

"The fair this year will be fantastic," she said. "We expect the weather to be in the 80s, and the grounds are looking better than they have in 20 years."

For more information, visit www.tcfair.org or call (559) 686-4707.

Wait Until Dark Opens at Temple Theatre

Staff Reports

The Temple Theatre will be transformed into an arena of intrigue and suspense with the opening of "Wait Until Dark" on Friday, September 4. The play, written by Frederick Knott, is probably best known by the movie production starring Audrey Hepburn.

A sinister conman, Harry Roat, and two ex-convicts, Mike and Carlino, are about to meet their match. They have traced the location of a mysterious doll, harboring a small fortune in drugs, to the Greenwich Village apartment of Sam Hendrix and his recently blind wife, Susy. Sam Hendrix was asked to watch after the doll by a woman he didn't know, as they departed a plane.

The con man and his ex-convicts, through a cleverly constructed deception, convince Susy that the police have implicated Sam in the woman's murder, and the doll, which she believes is the key to his innocence, is evidence.

She refuses to reveal its location, and with the help of a young neighbor, figures out she is the victim of a bizarre charade. Susy knows the only way to play fair is by her rules, so when darkness falls she turns off all the lights leaving them to maneuver in the dark until the game ends.

Harry Roat is played by John C. Rabe with Mike played by Nickolas Beatty and Carlino, by Ron W. Bates. The blind Susy is played by Lindsey Sarrate and her husband, Sam, by Brian Farley. Other cast members include Maria Farley as Gloria, Nicole Griffiths and police officer #1 and Sarah Conner as police officer #2. Understudy Miranda Salazar will perform as Gloria during Sunday matinees.

Gloria (Maria Farley) catches Mike (Nickolas Beatty) trying to persuade Suzy (Lindsey Sarrate) into revealing the location of the hidden doll. Photo courtesy of Jennifer Toledo.

"Wait Until Dark" director, Jennifer Toledo, chose the play on the suggestion of a friend. She wanted to do a show different than the norm for the theater.

"Suspense-thriller is out of the box for us," she said.

The play was presented to the board and chosen for the season. Casting took place in early June and rehearsals began shortly after the 4th of July.

Toledo assisted directed for the first time in 2013, and made her directorial debut in last year's production of "Lost in Yonkers" at the Temple Theatre.

"I do act, as well," she said. "My first at the Temple Theatre was in December, 2010 – I played three men."

Since, she has played in multiple shows at the Temple Theatre and the Ice House Theatre.

"Wait Until Dark" performances are on Fridays and Saturdays, September 4-26 at 7:30 pm and Sunday matinees, September 6-27 at 2pm. The Temple Theatre is located at 514 Visalia St. in Hanford.

This show is not suitable for small children.

Advance tickets are $12 and maybe purchased on the web at www.kingsplayers.net; or $14 at the door.

For more information, call (559) 584-7241 or visit the website.

Education

West Hills College Lemoore Ranked Top Community College in Northern California

Staff Reports

USA Today has named West Hills College Lemoore the top community college in Northern California based on criteria including university transfer rate, student-faculty ratio, affordability and distance education.

WHCL was also highlighted as one of the region's star performers when it comes to distance education, ranking number one overall with an estimated 43% of students enrolled in a form of distance education.

"West Hills College Lemoore is dedicated to serving students and a major part of that is making sure that education is accessible to them," said WHCL President Don Warkentin. "Our continuous online curriculum development and support systems have allowed us to reach many more students that otherwise may not have been able to enroll in courses on the campus."

Dr. Frank Gornick, Chancellor of the West Hills Community College District, said the efforts of faculty, staff and administration who have devoted their time to improving student success is a large reason for the college's achievement.

"It is wonderful to see the great work by our faculty, staff and administration receive this well-deserved recognition on behalf of our students and the citizens of Kings County," he said.

In the article, the top ten colleges in Northern and Southern California from a previous ranking of the top 25 schools throughout the state were rated based on several different metrics.

Northern Californian colleges, including WHCL, came out on top for transfer rate with the schools producing almost 60% more transfer students than schools in Southern California.

Southern California ranked highest as a region when it came to distance education, although WHCL ranked number one in Northern California.

The two regions were even based on student-faculty ratio, which went to Northern California and affordability, which went to Southern California.

Overall, Northern California was listed as better for students looking for smaller classes while affordability was mentioned as an incentive for students attending Southern California colleges.

Alongside WHCL, top-ranked schools in Northern California also included Porterville College at #2, San Jose City College and Mendocino College.

The article can be found at http://college.usatoday.com/2015/07/30/norcal-vs-socal-community-colleges/.

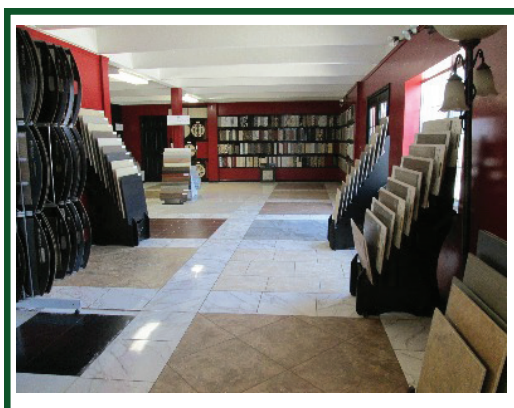
Visalia Unified Public Notice

The Visalia Unified School District hereby gives notice that during the regularly scheduled Board of Education meeting on September 22, 2015, a public hearing will be held.

Pursuant to Education Code 60119, a public hearing is required in order to be eligible to receive instructional materials funds.

The Governing Board encourages participation by parents, teachers, and community interested in this topic and shall make determination through resolution as to whether each pupil in each school in the district has or will have sufficient textbooks or instructional materials within the next school year.

The meeting will begin at 7:00 P.M. and will be held in the Board Room located at 5000 West Cypress Avenue, Visalia, California.



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Great Conversations

Truth and Democracy: Ibsen's *An Enemy of the People*

Joseph R. Teller

What if you discovered that the spring that provides your community's water was toxic? What if your town was also a resort community that depended on tourism—especially on visitors to your community's natural spring baths?

And what if those in power already suspected this problem, but were pressuring you to keep quiet, since blowing the whistle would destroy the town's economy?

Would you risk your own ruin and the ruin of the town, and tell the community the truth anyway? Would you trust in your fellow citizens' desire to know the truth?

What if—to make matters even more complicated—you yourself were indirectly to blame for the toxic water to begin with? And what if, once you told your fellow citizens the truth, they actually turned against you—and threatened your family and your life for your gift of the truth?

Such is the predicament of Dr. Stockman, the central character in Henrik Ibsen's play, *An Enemy of the People*, which the COS Great Books group discussed last week at their first meeting of the academic year.

Stockman is a naïve but well-intentioned man who has discovered that the baths which are the lifeblood of his town's economy—baths he helped invent—are fouled with toxic detritus, some of which comes from his own father-in-law's tannery.

Dr. Stockman is sure his brother, the town's mayor, the local newspaper, and the townspeople will be grateful to learn the truth.

But Dr. Stockman quickly learns that no one wants the story to get out: his own brother convinces himself that the problem isn't really a problem; the newspaper is run by a self-proclaimed "moderate" who does not want to offend his customers; the local reporters are ideologues who care more about "revolution" than they do about the well-being of their neighbors.

Even Stockman's wife is hesitant for the news to break: if her husband loses his position as the medical officer of the baths (which will happen if the baths shut down), she and her children will be homeless.

Dr. Stockman believes in "the people," and convenes a public meeting to inform them, and to show the mayor and powerbrokers of the town that they won't win this battle over truth.

But at the meeting, Stockman quickly realizes the townspeople do not want the truth. In a climactic—and perhaps prideful—change of heart, Stockman berates the people, saying, "the most dangerous foe to truth and freedom in our midst is the majority…the confounded, solid, liberal majority."

He also compares "the plebeian mongrels that haunt the gutters" with the "poodle, descended through many generations from aristocratic stock."

The citizens turn violently against this apparently anti-democratic Stockman, dubbing him an enemy of the people.

The play ends with Stockman refusing to be bribed to change "his story" about the baths, proclaiming that "the strongest man in the world is he who stands most alone."

Our group was fascinated by Ibsen's depiction of the conflicts and intersections between scientific truth, economic pragmatism, and democratic processes—conflicts playing out in our own society (just think about climate change or vaccination policies).

We were also fascinated by the play's interrogation of both political and personal motivations: Are our motives ever purely altruistic? Or is self-interest usually our guiding principle—even of scientific investigation or philanthropy? Is being a lone prophet worth it? Is "moderation" sometimes a better policy than unvarnished truth? Are there values more important than being right? And if so, what are they?

Children at the 2014 Sequoia Union Annual Fall Carnival.

Sequoia Union Elementary PTC to Hold Small Town Hoedown Carnival

Lisa McEwen

The Sequoia Union Elementary School Parent Teacher Club (PTC) invites the community to attend its Annual Fall Carnival, set for 5:30-9pm on Saturday, September 26.

This year's event, dubbed "Small Town Hoedown," promises traditional family fun, including bingo, a delicious deep-pit beef dinner, carnival games, a photo booth and much more. A vast silent auction, made possible by the generosity of local business owners, will also be available for those who want to do some early holiday shopping.

Sequoia Union is a kindergarten through eighth grade single-school district in Lemon Cove. Approximately 325 students attend the school.

The carnival is hosted by a dedicated group of parents whose only goal is to raise funds for the school's field trips, performing arts programs, National History Day competitors and school assemblies. Last year, PTC's efforts raised $25,000 during the carnival. This year, the goal is $27,000.

Sequoia Union students travel the state on some of the most enriching field trips possible. Some destinations include California's historic missions, Hospital Rock in Sequoia National Park, a local dairy, SCICON, and a tour of the state Capitol in Sacramento.

The delicious from-scratch dinner benefits the 8th grade class, which is raising funds toward their three-day tour of San Francisco at the end of the school year. Dinner tickets are $8 for adults and $5 for children.

For those who would like to make a donation to the carnival, please call (559) 564-2106 or email ptc@sequoiaunion.org. The PTC is a 501 (c)3 and all donations are 100% tax deductible. Business and family sponsorship packages are also available. Please contact PTC for more information.

Entrance to the carnival is free and game tickets cost just 25 cents each.

Charcoal and Pastel Shows at Tulare Historical Museum

Staff Reports

"Catching the Light in Charcoal and Pastel" has opened at the Tulare Historical Museum Gallery.

This latest exhibit shows 50 works by Visalia's LaVone Sterling and Ellen Milinich.

"They are both accomplished artists," said museum curator Chris Harrell. "They have shown together before and each has had pieces in the gallery before."

Pink Explosion, pastel by LaVone Sterling

Sterling, a signature member of the Pastel Society of America, only began working with pastels as a medium a few years ago.

She attended a pastel workshop with her daughters and was immediately hooked, citing the vibrant quality of pastels.

Her work may be found in public and private collections around the country. Sterling does accept commissioned pet portraits in pastel.

Milinich, whose father was a community college art instructor, grew up in an artistic environment, but it was not until after her children were grown that she applied herself to her craft.

Charcoals are her favorite medium, and pastels secondary.

She says her talent is "God-given" and she is available for commissioned portraiture.

"Light in Charcoal and Pastel" runs through Thursday, October 10. The Tulare Historical Museum, located at 444 W. Tulare Avenue in Tulare, is open Thursday-Saturday, 10am-4pm and Sundays, September-May, from 12:30-4pm.

For more information visit http://www.tularehistoricalmuseum.org/ or call (559) 686-2074.

Calendar

VENDOR ALERT SPACE AVAILABLE:
The 30th annual Holiday Bazaar sponsored by the Three Rivers Senior League will be Saturday, November 14th, 9am to 4pm. The event is held at the Three Rivers Memorial Building. Vendor spaces are $25.00 for outside and $30 for the inside. For further information please call Mo Basham 561-4988 or email wildirish57att.net

Mondays: Bridge Club, 9:30am-2pm
210 W Center Street Visalia, CA 93291 Admission is free. For additional information call: Joan Dinwiddie @ 732-0855

Mondays: Knitters, 10am-12:30pm
210 W Center Street Visalia, CA 93291. Everyone's welcome.

Fridays: Women's Morning Bible Study, 9am-Noon
210 W Center Street Visalia, CA 93291. For additional information call: 739-9010

Saturdays starting August 22: Dog Obedience Course, 9-10am
6-week Basic Manner course, Exeter City Park. $120/6-week-course. For more information, call (559) 568-8863 or email fortheloveofdg@doglover.com.

1st and 3rd Wednesdays: MOPS meeting, 9-11am
The Tulare Mothers of Preschoolers--MOPS--will be meeting the first and third Wednesday of each month at the Tulare First Baptist Church gym from 9am to 11am. Childcare is provided. There are some costs for attending. For contact information Leslie Elliott is the President her telephone number is (916) 223-1101. This is open to anyone they do not have to attend church.

1st and 3rd Thursdays: Central Valley Tea Party Meetings, 6pm
819 West Visalia Road, Farmersville.

Through October 28: Free Fly Casting Instruction, 6-7pm
Kaweah Fly Fishers are offering fly casting lessons at Del Lago Park in Tulare every Wednesday evening until October 28. Rods and reels will be supplied or you may bring your own.

September 3: 20th Anniversary Making a Difference for Life Fundraising Banquet, 7pm
Tulare-Kings Right to Life will host their 20th Anniversary Making a Difference for Life Fundraising Banquet. In addition to being TKRL's most popular event of the year and one of the largest non-profit banquets in the area, this evening will

SEPTEMBER

also celebrate the culmination of 25 years of leadership from Executive Director, April Kesterson, and introduce attendees to the incoming Executive Director. In keeping with the 20th Anniversary celebratory theme, prices have been reduced this year: Sponsorships for a Table of 8 are $495; individual tickets may be purchased for $65 each. For more information or to reserve your table, please call 732-5000, email april@tkrl.org, or visit www.tkrl.org.

September 3: "Color, Texture, and Design"Exhibit at Fresno City Hall, 5-8pm
Featuring Main Gallery Artists Toni Best, Jeri Burzin, Laurie Gorman, Beckie Nava, and Deborah Nolan. Art Hop Thursday, September 3, 5:00 - 8:00 pm Exhibition Dates: Sept. 1 – Sept. 25.

September 4: Central Valley Parkinson's Support Group Meeting, 10:30am
To be held in the Pre School Center of Visalia United Methodist Church located at 5200 West Caldwell, Visalia. Program - Video: "NUTRITION" Lunch: TACOSPlan to join us for lunch and good conversation after the meeting: www.cvpsg.net or cvparkinsons@gmail.com or 559-280-0301.

September 4: Business Seminar Series De-escalation, 3:30-5pm
At the train depot/Lemoore Chamber. Tickets $15 for members, $20 for non-members. For more information call (559) 924-6401.

September 4: First Friday, 6-9pm
Explore Visalia's vibrant downtown--stroll Main Street and experience the many Arts.

September 4: Blues, Brews, And BBQs, 6-10pm
Andrew J. Magnuson performs a free concert to benefit the Visalia Emergency Aid Council at the Garden Street Plaza in Visalia.

September 4: Concert in Springville Park, 7-9:30
Jerry Hall

September 5: First Saturday, 10am-5pm
Every first Saturday, monthly, the artists, restaurants and shops of Three Rivers open their doors for a town-wide celebration. Map and schedule available at Anne Lang's Emporium, 41651 Sierra Dr. (Hwy 198).

September 9: Social Media: How To Create a Successful Campaign, 9-10am
Visalia Chamber of Commerce Business Academy Presents: Let's Talk Social: Presented by True Legacy Consulting, at Brandman University 649 South County Center, Visalia. With all the changes happening to different Social Media platforms it is difficult to figure out what is actually working! We will go over what changes have been made and ways to be successful despite them! Chamber Members - Free; Non-Chamber Members $30.00. For more information contact Nicola Wissler at 559-734-5876.

September 9: Visalia Senior Center 50+ ROCKS Open House, 4-7pm
This event is designed to bring together businesses, program opportunities and service providers to our 50 and better population. Hosted by Central Valley Tax Services.

September 9: Visalia Young Entrepreneurs Academy Information Session, 6pm
YEA! sponsors participate as panelists at the CEO Round table and Investor Panel events inspiring the next generation of local entrepreneurs. To date more than $11,000 in start-up funding has been awarded to YEA! student businesses. At the Visalia Chamber Office - 222 N. Garden St. Suite 300. For more information contact Nicola Wissler at nicola@visaliachamber.org or 559-734-5876

September 9: Way Back Wednesdays--Classic Flicks at the Fox, 7pm
On the second Wednesday monthly through April, 2016, the Visalia Fox Theatre presents a classic film. Admission is $5 and includes a small popcorn. Tonight: Singin' In the Rain, 1952.

September 10: Bestselling Author Jane Porter, 6pm
College of the Sequoias is pleased to welcome bestselling author Jane Porter to discuss the creative process behind her new book, It's You. Jane Porter is a Visalia native with strong roots in the community and COS. Copies of It's You will be available for purchase and signing. This free event will be held on the COS campus-Ponderosa Building (reception to follow).

September 11-13: Dark Sky Festival
The night sky in Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks is nationally recognized. Our darkness not only adds to the aesthetic qualities of the wilderness, but is important to the health of our wildlife. The Dark Sky Festival aims to educate visitors about the importance of this park resource and inspire them to take action in their own community. We hope you join us in the summer of 2015 and share your passion for the night sky and astronomy during this fun weekend. The weekend will include: constellation tours telescope viewings solar observations astronaut speakers kids activities speakers on robotic mars missions model rocket building National Park Service programs special Crystal Cave tours Nature walks audio visual presentations photography presentations and more! All events are free (park admission $20/good for 5 days). For more information, call the Sequoia Natural History Association at 559-565-4222.

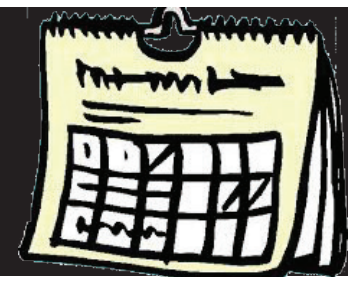
September 11: Bounty of the County, 6-10pm
Join Farm Bureau for a fun filled evening of culinary bites, delicious drinks and samples of specialty products all centered around Tulare County's #1 industry, agriculture! The 6th annual Bounty of the Country event will take place on September 11 from 6-9 PM at the Historic Seven Sycamores Ranch in Ivanhoe, Farmers, chefs, brew masters and winemakers throughout the county are taking part to bring the agriculture goods of our area. Guests will be entertained by live music as well as have a chance to win prizes donated by Family Farm Fresh and the Tulare County Farm Bureau. Most importantly, patrons will be able to taste savory products ranging from tasty meats to luscious wine to grilled vegetables and locally grown specialty nuts and olives. Many local Tulare County businesses will be represented such as Family Farm Fresh, Rosa Brothers Milk Company, Farmer's Fury Wines, Figuazzis and many more! Tickets cost $45 and are now available at the TCFB office, 732-8301.

September 11: Porterville CHAP "Comics and the Art of Visual Communication" 7-8pm
Comics is finally coming of age as an artistic and literary form. Now this once-maligned medium of expression is poised for new opportunities, thanks to a changing media environment and a potential revolution in visual education. Author and comics artist Scott McCloud (Understanding Comics, The Creator, Making Comics) shines a light on these and other fascinating trends in a fast-moving visual presentation. Book signing to follow.

September 11: Pops in the Park, 8-9:15pm
This is your chance to join friends and family for an informal picnic dinner under the stars and hear the great music of the Orchestra. Presented by and benefitting VRM. Tickets available vrmhope.org/events

September 12: Pancake Breakfast, 7-10am
The Visalia Breakfast Lions Club & Financial Credit Network invite you to a Pancake Breakfast benefiting Kids for Christmas at 1300 West Main Street, Visalia. $10 per person. Includes: All you can eat Pancakes Also serving Eggs, Sausage, Coffee, Milk and Juice ASK US FOR TICKET INFORMATION! Contact: Venita Jourdan (559) 733-7550.

September 12: Car Show at West Hills College to Benefit Scholarship Program, 8am-2pm
Registration is still open for West Hills College's inaugural car show, which will be held at West Hills College Coalinga. Street rods, hot rods, low riders, stock and modified cars and pick-ups are welcome. The sign-up fee is $25 and registration will remain open until the day of the show. Spectators are welcome and admission is free. Food and beverages will also be available. The show will benefit the President's Scholars Program which provides free tuition to top area students at WHCC, West Hills College Lemoore and North District Center, Firebaugh. Pre-register online at westhillscollege.com/carshow. For more information about the event, contact Butch Wright



at 559-935-3327 or at 59otsjag@gmail.com. Set-up will begin at 6am, with judging at 10am.

September 12: "Just Walk" With a Doc, 8-9am
The Healthy Visalia Committee working in partnership with Kaweah Delta Health Care District, Family HealthCare Network, Tulare County Medical Society and the Visalia Parks and Recreation Dept. continues its 2015 Visalia's "Just Walk" With a Doc walking program. The walks will take place at Blain Park, 3101 S. Court St., in Visalia.

September 12: Small Town Cruizers 11th Annual Summer Send Off, 9am-3pm
Come together / Park together! registration 7-9am • Awards 2:45 pm • Raffles each hour merchant awards & ten Special trophies • Club Participation trophy Cash Drawings • Vendor alley • Oldies music by DJ John Avila. Next to Will Tiesiera Ford 2101 E. Cross St, Tulare. Open to all years of: Hot Rods, Customs, Classics, Antique Cars, Muscle Cars, Street Rods, Stockers, Motorcycles, PT Cruisers, Roadsters, Corvettes, Low Riders, Trucks, and Pick Ups. All net proceeds to benefit: Central Valley WWII Veterans honor Flight Tulare Chapter and Tulare Baseball association. For more information visit www.smalltowncruizers.com or contact Bob at 559-623-1790.

September 12: Houston Neighborhood Park Grand Opening and Ribbon Cutting, 10am
Located at the corner of Houston Avenue and Turner Street in Visalia, the opening ceremony will be from 10-10:30am. The celebration afterward will last until 1pm.

September 12: Jazz In Three Rivers, 1pm
At the Three Rivers memorial Building on Sierra Dr. Hot dogs with all the trimmings including chili will be served starting at 1pm, High Sierra Jazz Band will be on Stage from 2- 5 pm. Hot dogs are $5, concert $10. Concert free to STJC (Sierra Traditional Jazz Club) members. For more info call 561-4030 or 561-4321.

September 12: Children's Storybook Garden & Museum Annual Fall Fundraising Event, 5pm
A jazz night themed party with the Amazing Lemoore High School Choir performing "And All That Jazz". Roaring 20's fashion is encouraged. Come join us for this really fun opportunity to support the Children's Storybook Garden & Museum. Tickets are only $65.00 and a table of 8 is $500. Appetizers, dinner, dessert, live auction, silent auction, dancing and watching!

September 12: CCPRA 2nd Annual Rodeo, 5-11:30pm
Schedule of Events: Team Roping; Breakaway Roping; Barrel Racing; Street Racing; Tie Down Roping; Bareback Riding; Saddle Bronc Riding; Bull Riding; Team Roping; Barrel Racing; Kids Barrel Race; Muttin Bustin. Must be a Tulare County resident to compete. Immediately following the Rodeo featuring local County Western Band Branded Heart 9:30-11:30. Must have Rodeo admission. At the Tulare County Fair215 Martin Luther King Jr. Tulare. General Admission $10 Presale /$15 at Gate.VIP $65 Presale / $70 at gate includes preferred seating, refreshments & dinner. For more information, call 559-686-4707.

September 12: Pops In the Park, 8pm
The Tulare County Symphony performs in Tulare's Zumwalt Park, on the corner of Tulare Avenue and M Street. Tickets are $20. For tickets or more information call 732-8600.

September 13: Dennis Wong Memorial 5k Race, 6:30am
The race/walk is along Tulare's Santa Fe Trail. There is a 2-mile fun run/walk for kids. $15 to enter high school and kids' mile or $25 to enter the open 5k run or 2-mile walk. The latter includes a T-shirt and admission to the Tulare County Fair. The race begins at Santa Fe Trail at Mooney Blvd., behind Teixeira Ford. For more information, call 685-6100.

September 14: College of the Sequoias Great Books Discussion Group, 4-5:30pm
The group meets second and fourth Mondays monthly in the COS campus' Hospital Rock 133 room in front of the Book Store, just SE of Kern. Tonight's topic: Henri Poincaré, "The Value of Science."

September 15: TCOE College Night, 5-8pm
At the Visalia Convention Center. Contact Kim Rice at the Tulare County Office of Education for more information.

September 17: Porterville CHAP "MAGNA CARTA: 800 Years of Constitutional History and Myth" 11:30am-12:30pm
Presented by Jay Hargis, History Professor An obscure uprising of English nobles against King John in the early 13th century produced a document - the Magna Carta - that over time laid the foundation for some of our key constitutional concepts and protections enshrined in the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and many of our laws, both federal and state. While its conception, content, and meaning have been overblown a bit and mythologized over the past 800 years, it is still being used as a source of precedent and intent in recent Supreme Court rulings.

September 17-22: American Association of University Women Book Sale, Regular Mall Hours
The annual AAUW book sale at Sequoia Mall will be in September instead of October. There will NOT be a preview night on the evening before the sale. Prices will vary this sale and there will be some special offers on books. 100% of the profit made goes to scholarships for local students.

September 17: Effective Negotiations Workshop, 3-6pm
This workshop will include: Understanding contracts - fixed time and material, Common negotiated Areas, What is the Business Objective- long term versus short term profits To register for this Workshop contact the Tulare Kings Hispanic Chamber of Commerce at (559) 734-6020 or to armondo@mytkhcc.org

SEPT 19: Mothers United Against Gang Violence Car Show, 7am
Mothers United Against Gang Violence will be having their very first ANNUAL CAR SHOW on Saturday - SEPTEMBER 19th 2015. Sign-in time will start at 7am under the Big Time Clock on Main Street and Cleveland Ave. in Porterville. Registration is $25 at the door. Trophies and plaques will be announced at 12:00 or thereabouts. Music, entertainment and food vendors will be at the event.

September 19: 5K For Care; Superheroes Saving Lives, 7am-Noon
Join Care Pregnancy Resource Center for the 2nd annual 5K For Care; Superheroes Saving Lives! Kids Fun Run begins at 7:30 am; cost is $10/per child. 5K Walk/Run begins at 8:00 am. Cost is $25/per entry before September 4th. $30 thereafter. Sign up before September 4th to guarantee a race shirt! Chapala Grill will be on site selling breakfast burrito's for $6.00 and live music by DJ Johnny Bhoy will be featured! To register, please go to our website and follow the 5K for Care Link.

September 19: Porterville Park & Leisure Punt, Pass & Kick, 9:30 am-Noon
Young pro football fans will have the opportunity to exhibit their football skills when Porterville Parks and Leisure hosts a NFL Punt, Pass & Kick competition at the Porterville Sports Complex. The competition is free and open to boys and girls ages 6-15.The NFL Punt, Pass and Kick program is a national skills competition for boys and girls with over 200,000 youngsters participating each year nationwide. The local competition will take place inside the Sports Complex at 2701 W. Scranton Ave. Registration begins at 9:30am and participants can compete anytime between 10am and noon. For more information on the Punt, Pass & Kick program visit www.nflppk.com. For more information about the local competition contact Parks and Leisure Services at (559) 791-7695 or check out the City of Porterville website.

September 19: Handmade and Homegrown Craft Fair, 10am-4pm
Handmade and Homegrown Craft Fair brought to you by The Looking Glass, on the corner of Caldwell and Garden in the Whites Music Shopping Center. We have more than 35 vendors featuring their handmade goods. Jewelry, Children's Boutique Clothing and Accessories, Wood and Wire Crafts Birdhouses, Handmade Soaps, Fine Art and Photography, Local Honey and Jams, Up-cycled and Repurposed Décor, furniture and so much more! The Visalia Rescue Mission will be there with a truck to take any donation, large or small! Visit us on the web at thelookingglassvisalia.com or contact the store at 242 E Caldwell 559.732.2787

September 19: Wish Upon A Star Bravefest, Noon-3pm
California Law Enforcement hosts Shave the Brave and its third annual Chili Bean Cook-off at the Garden Street Plaza in Visalia. There will be live music, family activities, face painting, bounce houses, Disney characters, a beer garden, raffle, and informational booths. Free admission.

September 19: Blues & Roots Festival, 5:30-10pm
The blues are alive and well in downtown Hanford and this special event boasts live blues entertainers in Civic Park. Enjoy the music, dance under the harvest moon and dine under the stars at this admission free event at the Hanford Civic Auditorium, 400 North Douty Street, Hanford.

September 19: Joan Jett in Concert, 7:30pm
Joan Jett performs at the Visalia Fox Theatre. Tickets $50-$100. Call 625-1369 or visit www.foxvisalia.org.

September 20: 11th Annual Garden Party Wine Affair, 4-7pm
The Cellar Door hosts a wine tasting to support the Green Acres Little Theatre Foundation. Hors d'oeuvres by Fugazzi's, the Vintage Press, Tazzaria and others. Tickets are $30 in advance or $35 at the door at 2205 Hyde Way in Visalia. For more information, call 739-1449.

September 20: Raise the Roof BBQ, 4:30-7pm
Tri-tip and chicken will be on the grill at the Tulare County Museum in Mooney Grove as the Tulare County Historical Society hosts a BBQ fundraiser to raise a new roof for the recently restored Visalia Electric Railroad Caboose. Sons of the San Joaquin will provide the music. Tickets are $45. For more information call 799-1164.

September 23: Life Skills Learning Center Open House Awards Night, 5-6pm
The public is invited to this free event. Life Skills Learning Center is a day activity program of ABLE Industries, Inc. and provides functional skills and community integration training to adults with disabilities. ABLE Industries, Inc. has been in operation for over 50 years and serves nearly 300 individuals with disabilities in Tulare County. Three community members will be recognized for their efforts in advocating for individuals with disabilities, including an employee of the North Visalia Target Store, will be presented an Outstanding Hospitality Award for her exceptional customer service to adults with disabilities.

Sports

Rawhide Gearing Up For Postseason Play

Stefan Barros

The Visalia Rawhide only have a few weeks left in the regular season. Once the regular season concludes, they will begin the playoffs for the second season in a row and look to head back to the California League Championship game for a second consecutive season.

Rawhide manager J.R. House believes his team is ready, and doesn't feel like his team has lost motivation after winning the first half.

"I haven't had to get on the guys at all," he said. "They like to win and they're playing to win. They keep playing hard."

The reward for winning the first half of the regular season is a bye in the first round of the playoffs.

This does mean they have an easier route to the championship, more so than any other team. House will be sure to take advantage of the rest his team will receive.

"The bye allows us to align our pitching staff and get our best pitchers on the mound for the playoff games," he said. "But we also have to stay sharp during the off days. They have to stay tuned and keep themselves ready, and make good use of the time off."

The Rawhide started out the season on a roll, and won the first half comfortably.

"It was early on, when I realized how quick chemistry came about with the team," he said. "The guys really enjoy playing with one other and they try to fit in with each other also. This group has been a joy."

With the success the team is having so far this season, awards are following for coaches and players.

House won the California League Manager of the Year award in his first season with Visalia.

House, though wants to give the credit for winning this award to the players on the field.

"It's really just a reflection of the guys on the guys on the field. I don't want to make a big deal about it," he said. "The award just usually goes the team with the best record the league, but this award goes to the players."

Though he gave credit to his players for winning the award, House did open up about what worked for him personally while managing this team to their current position in the CAL league.

"I just kept the mindset of how would I want to be treated as a player," he said. "To be successful you have to know when to be a friend to the guys, when to be a parent, and when to keep on them."

Expanding a little bit on the players who deserve this award, House talked about some of his offensive standouts this season who have helped the Rawhide get the best record in the California League.

"Our three through five guys in our batting order have been huge for us all season," he said. "Jamie Westbrook, our number three hitter, has really come along in the second half of the season. He's showing great balance at the plate and is much improved. [Daniel] Palka, our four hitter, is one of our big power guys and has been here all season, just being steady. Then Kevin Cron, our five hitter, is leading the league in some offensive categories. We've really depended on him all season."

House also talked about the team's pitching, which has been one of the best staffs in the California League.

"[Anthony] Banda, one of our starters, was named an all-star in the second half," he said. "He's really gained some attention as a prospect in the organization. The bullpen in general has been fantastic all year. It just shows how Gil [Heredia]won pitching coach of the year."

Heredia was named California League Pitching Coach of the Year this year for the California League.

Over the course of the season, there has been a very important aspect of the game for this team that has improved and is excelling right now. House elaborated on how much his offense has improved in the second half.

"First half of the season, our bats started off slow, and our pitching was carrying the team," he said. "Since the all-star break our hitters have caught up to the pitchers in the league, and are excelling now."

There are always certain things to be concerned about when your team is heading into the postseason, and House's main concern is a popular one amongst most managers.

"We just don't want any more injuries," he said. "[Mitch] Haniger, our lead-off hitter, went down a couple weeks ago. I just hope that doesn't come back to bite us. But if all the guys do their job we will be just fine. It'll be interesting to see who steps up when the playoffs come around."

Even though House may be concerned about injuries once the playoffs start, he has reason to feel very good about his team as they gear up for a championship run.

"These guys have the mindset of just playing baseball," he said. "All they do is play hard, and it really shows. I won't be worried about their effort."

The last regular season home game for the Rawhide will be Monday, September 7.

They will begin their run to a possible California League Championship at home on Saturday, September 12.

PC Welcomes Cascio as Director of Athletics and Student Programs

Porterville College President Dr. Rosa Carlson and Vice President of Student Services Val Garcia have announced the hiring of Joe Cascio as the college's new Director of Athletics and Student Programs.

Cascio comes to Porterville after serving as Director of Athletics at Long Beach City College. Prior to LBCC, Joe directed the athletic programs at Santa Monica College.

He also served as an adjunct faculty member at Santa Monica and most recently served as associate head coach of the SMC men's basketball team from 2007-2010.

Cascio brings over 20 years of coaching experience ranging from high school, AAU, and college to LBCC.

"I bring 5 years of experience in Athletics administration, a lengthy high school and college basketball coaching career, as well as a passion for student success," Cascio said. "I feel that athletics provides students that would maybe not otherwise go to college, a pathway to higher education."

Cascio earned his Masters of Arts in Physical Education Administration from California State University, Dominguez Hills in 2008 and received his Bachelor of Arts in Kinesiology from Cal State Dominguez Hills in 2007.

Joe Cascio, Porterville College's Director of Athletics and Student Programs. Photo courtesy Porterville College.

He was also a student in the California community college system and earned an Associate of Arts degree in physical education from El Camino College in 2005.

Cascio, his wife Yolanda and their three children hail from Redondo Beach, Calif.

His oldest daughter Jessica, is a senior at Long Beach State this fall, daughter Marissa is starting her sophomore year at Long Beach City and son Jackson is a senior at Redondo Union High School. Cascio will oversee the Porterville College Athletics Department and student programs such as Associated Students of PC (ASPC).

"I love the connection with the students, faculty and staff that comes with the community college experience," Cascio said. "It is very satisfying to see at-risk students get the opportunity to go to college. For many, it's a life-changing experience and something that's not often seen at the university level.."

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Health

"Run Free: The True Story of Caballo Blanco" to Premiere at Visalia Fox Theatre on September 10

Staff Reports

"Run Free: The True Story of Caballo Blanco," a feature-length documentary about ultra-running legend Micah True, will premiere at the Visalia Fox Theatre on Thursday, Sept. 10 at 7pm. The one-night-only event is sponsored by Sole2Soul Sports and presented by the Visalia Runners.

Micah True, better known as Caballo Blanco – the White Horse, was the focal character of Christopher McDougall's 2009 best-selling book "Born to Run: A Hidden Tribe, Superathletes and the Greatest Race the World Has Never Seen" about the Tarahumara Indians of northern Mexico. Also known as the Rarámuri, or Running People, they are some of the best long-distance runners in the world.

Caballo Blanco was an enigmatic visionary who lived and ran with the Tarahumara after moving to remote Copper Canyon in the 1990's, and who created the 50-mile Copper Canyon Ultra-Marathon to honor their running traditions and aid in their sustainability. Now in its 13th year, the race attracts hundreds of local Tarahumara to the village of Urique to compete alongside some of the best runners in the world. All race finishers receive 500 pounds of corn, which the international runners traditionally donate to the local Tarahumara, commemorating the spirit of sharing, or "kórima," which is a way of life among the natives of Copper Canyon.

The documentary is directed by Sterling Noren, a filmmaker from Seattle who met Micah True in 2009. Most of the material for the film was recorded in the weeks leading up to the 2012 race. Shortly after that race, Micah True disappeared in the Gila Wilderness of New Mexico during his daily run, prompting ultra-runners from all over the country to drop everything and join in the search. His body was recovered several days later, found on a trail in a deserted canyon by some of his friends.

"We wanted to tell the story of Micah True in a way that was exciting and authentic, so that viewers could get a sense of what an amazing and inspiring person he was," said Noren. "Micah's vision lives on and his legacy is honored in this film. The film shares Micah's compelling message of love, hope and kórima with the world while helping sustain the people and culture that meant so much to him. We're honored to be part of this project and are committed to keeping Micah's mission alive."

"Micah's genuine passion for honoring the sacred running traditions of the Tarahumara people was the essence of his being," said Maria Walton, executive producer of the film and Micah True's girlfriend at the time of his death. "We made this film to share Micah's vision of hope for the Tarahumara culture and empower people everywhere with his joy of running."

The 90-minute film recently won the 2015 Bud Greenspan Memorial Film and Video Award, presented by the Track & Field Writers of America. In addition, the film was named winner of the prestigious Award of Excellence from the IndieFEST Film Awards, which recognizes film, television and new media professionals who demonstrate exceptional achievement in craft and creativity, contributing to profound social change. The IndieFEST Film Awards said of its latest winners, "The IndieFEST is not an easy award to win. Entries are received from around the world from powerhouse companies to remarkable new talent. The judges were pleased with the exceptional high quality of entries," of which Run Free was singled out for its creative excellence.

Micah True, also known as Caballo Blanco.

Most recently, the film was named the Best Documentary at the 2015 Arizona International Film Festival.

A percentage of the film's profits, including DVD sales, will go to benefit Norawas de Rarámuri (Friends of the Running People), the non-profit agency founded by Micah True to preserve traditional Tarahumara culture. Norawas de Rarámuri works to provide maize, non-GMO seed corn, and cash awards for participating Tarahumara runners, both men and women alike. In this way, the organization offers Tarahumara families nutrition during drought and support for a tradition of small farms necessary to both physical and cultural survival.

Tickets for this special event are $13 in advance at the Visalia Fox Theatre's box office and at www.foxvisalia.org, or $16 at the door the night of the show. The Fox Theatre is located at 308 W. Main St.

Sole2Soul Sports is the community's leading running footware and fitness store, with locations in Visalia, Bakersfield and Fresno. For more information, visit www.sole-2soulsports.com.

The Visalia Runners was originally founded in 1979 as a long-distance running club, but over the years has evolved into a broader organization with a philosophy of advocating healthy living for runners of all levels and abilities and to giving back to the community. For more information, visit www.visaliarunners.org.

For more information about the film, go to www.runfreemovie.com.

FHCN Opens New Tulare Health Center

Family HealthCare Network (FHCN) announces its newest Community Health Center has opened in Tulare. Located at 263 S. West St., services offered include comprehensive family medicine for all ages including annual wellness and physical exams, immunizations, chronic disease management, acute care, dental, behavioral health and patient health education.

"Family HealthCare Network is proud to be a new health partner located in the City of Tulare," stated Kerry Hydash, president & CEO of Family HealthCare Network. "Our patients from Tulare have been very supportive, as well as our community based partners, and we look forward to continuing to serve them in their own community."

FHCN's Tulare Health Center will initially open with limited hours. Full time hours will expand to Monday – Friday from 7am to 9pm and Saturdays from 8am to 5pm. To schedule an appointment, or for more information, call 1-877-960-3426, or visit the website at www.fhcn.org.

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Tulare County Fair Offers New Thrills On the Midway

Staff Reports

The Tulare County Fair, September 16-20, will unveil the Olympic Bobsled roller coaster for the first time – along with the chance to go to the front of the line with a FASTPass wristband.

The new roller coaster and the returning "Big Splash" ride, introduced at the 2014 fair, are worth $3.5 million and require seven semi-trailers to move. They will make a huge impact on the Fair's Midway, noted Corey Oakley of Helm and Sons Amusements.

The Olympic Bobsled offers amusement park-quality twists, turns, climbs and drops and features more than 3,000 LED lights.

The pirate-themed Big Splash water ride was hugely popular in its first year at the Tulare County Fair, Oakley noted. The ride will cover more than 650 feet, or more than two football fields, of water-filled track. It has two drops of over 30 feet and a "Big Splash" finale.

Both of these rides are included in the wristband, which sells for $20 each in advance through local nonprofit organizations and the fair, and $30 during fair week. Wristbands are good for every ride in the Midway for one day.

Also new this year is the FASTPass, which allows riders to go to the front of the line (at operator discretion) either Friday, Saturday or Sunday of the fair for $50 per wristband. Each ride will have a specially marked FASTPass entrance. The pass is good for one day only and can be purchased at specially marked ticket boxes.

"Competition among fairs insures that the operators are constantly on the lookout for the next best thing," Oakley added. "This year, the Tulare County Fair is attracting the large, expensive thrill rides – such as the Big Splash and Olympic Bobsled. Several of these million-dollar rides will grace the midway."

The "Olympic Bobsled" roller coaster will be newly featured at the Tulare County Fair.

The Wave Swinger that was once a staple at Michael Jackson's Neverland Valley Ranch will return, along with a completely refurbished Zipper ride.

The fair will also offer a wide variety of rides for younger children not yet ready for the fast and furious rides of the Midway.

The Creative Center's Jon Ginsburg Gallery to Host First Friday Downtown Art Walk

Joan Constable

The Creative Center's Jon Ginsburg Gallery is honored to be the host venue for Visalia's September First Friday Downtown Art Walk on Friday, September 4, at 410 Race Avenue from 6-8pm. "Under the Harvest Moon" is an invitational show featuring the works of area artists as well as The Creative Center's talented artists.

The artists participating have agreed to donate 20 percent of their sales to the Creative Center, so please come out and support our wonderful facility and buy some art! A fall theme prevails through the artwork, making us look forward to cooler weather and hopefully rain! The gallery will have a fall dessert bar and, perhaps, live music. As the "First Stop" of the Art Walk, there will be maps of the other participating venues. Visitors may catch the Visalia Trolley to take them around town to the different venues.

"Under the Harvest Moon" will run through October 30. Please check in Monday-Friday from 10am-3pm at the main office at 606 N. Bridge to see the show and tour our gallery.

As always, The Creative Center would like to thank the local community for its continued support. The non-profit community arts center for adults with developmental disabilities offers the mission of fostering self-expression, self-worth and personal growth through the arts, community integration, providing cultural resources to the community, and recognizing the individual's value and contribution.

Nancy Randell - "Pumpkins" - Watercolor